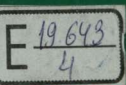


Nodar Asatiani Otar Janelidze



History of Georgia



NODAR ASATIANI
OTAR JANELIDZE

HISTORY OF GEORGIA

FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY

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This book tells us about Georgia, the country situated in the Caucasus.

It is the country of ancient myths, original culture and rich history.

The reader has an opportunity to have a glance at the quest of Georgian people from ancient times to the present day.

The author of the Georgian history, from the beginning till the 19 th century, is Prof. N. Asatiani, and the author of the rest of the book is Prof. O. Janelidze.

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საქართველოს
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Introduction

Georgia is the English name of the country, situated at the junction of Europe and Asia that has only recently gained independence and restored her statehood, lost almost two hundred years ago. It is also the name by which she is known in the greater part of the modern European languages (French - Géorgie, German - Georgien, Spanish - Georgiano, Italian - Georgia, etc.). This name comes from the Latin - "georgiani". Jaque de Vitry (1160-1240), the French scholar and churchman, tried to explain the term etymologically as early as in the 13th century in his work "Historia Hierosolimitana abbreviata", written in Latin. He dedicated a whole chapter to elucidating this question. He wrote: "There is a Christian nation in the East, great warriors, quick while fighting, of sturdy build, as if made of oak. They have a numerous army. They arouse mortal fear in Saracens and often defeat Persians, Medians and Assyrians as well as other infidels that surrounded her from all sides. These people are called **georgiani**, for they worship most of all, revere greatly and idolize Saint George whom they consider to be their protector and patron in their wars..."

The worship of St. George is of special reverence in Georgia indeed, but contemporary scholarship has a different interpretation of this ethnonym. It must be coming from the Middle and Modern Persian languages in which "gurgan" means "the country of wolves" that must be a totem designation of ancient Georgians.

It is also known that one of the southern states of the USA has the same name (Georgia), but it is an accidental coincidence of names and it has nothing to do with the Caucasian Georgia. The Georgians call themselves "Kartveli", and their country "Sakartvelo". The explanation of this will follow below.

* Ch. Cannuyer, Les Géorgiens dans l'Historia Hierosolimitana de Jaques de Vitry, " Bedi Kartlisa " (Revue de Kartvelologie), vol. XLI, Paris, 1983, p. 177.

** G.V. Tsereteli. Towards the Iranian Designations of Georgia. Collection of works: "The Foreign and Georgian Terminology Designating Georgia and Georgians", (Summary in English), Tb. 1993.





Physical-Geographic Characteristic Features of Georgia

General information

As the legend has it, Georgia is the country given to Mary, Mother of God by the Lord. And indeed its location and natural conditions are divine.

Georgia, one of the most ancient Christian countries of the world, is situated in the Southern Caucasus and occupies its central and western parts. It lies at the junction of the two continents – Europe and Asia and belongs to the countries of the Black Sea Region. In the north it is bordered by the mountain system of the Greater Caucasus, in the south – by the Smaller Caucasus. In the west Georgia is washed by the Black Sea, and in the east its border is the River Alazani. The whole length of its borders is about 2000 km-s. Its borderline on the land is 1660 km-s as for the rest of it, it follows the Black Sea coast.

The territory of Georgia amounts to 69.7 thousand square kilometers. Its population is 4.6 million (according to the 2003 census data); 83.8% of the population is ethnic Georgians. Jews have the longest history (26 centuries) of living in Georgia among the non-Georgian nations. The Abkhazs are autochthons. Azerbaijanians (6.5%) are most numerous by their population after Georgians, Armenians (5.7%), Ossets (2.2%), Russians (1.5%) Abkhazs (1.0%), Greeks (0.3%), etc.

Georgia is divided into the following parts administratively: Kakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Lower Kartli, Inner Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Imereti, Guria, Ajara, Abkhazeti, Samegrelo, Racha-Lechkhumi and Svaneti.

There are two autonomous republics on the territory of Georgia – those of Abkhazia and Ajara, and ten regions (Tbilisi, Kakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Lower Kartli, Inner Kartli, Imereti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Guria, Samegrelo, Upper Svaneti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Lower Svaneti). This is the political-administrative organization of Georgia.

Two thirds of Georgia's territory is mountainous. The lowlands, situated between the mountains and the Black Sea littoral are used for habitation and economic development. There are 54 towns, 44 urban-type settlements, 4314 villages in the country. Tbilisi (1253000



inhabitants), Kutaisi (186000 inhabitants), Rustavi (116000 inhabitants), Batumi (122000 inhabitants), and Sukhumi are considered to be cities. The average density of the population per one square kilometer is 67 persons. The average density of the population in the zone situated at the foot of mountains per one square kilometer is more than 250 people.

The correlation of the urban and rural population shows the priority of the former. According to the data of the 2002 census, 52% of the population lives in towns, and 48% - in villages. The gender balance in the 20th century changed in favor of the female population, and is as follows: female population -52%, male population 48%; the average life-span is above the average statistic data - it is 72 years.

Georgia is a typical state of an average rating, by its area and the number of its population. According to the area of its territory it has the 118th place among the countries of the world, and the 96th place by the number of its population.

Georgia has been a member state of the United Nations Organization since 1992, and a member of the European Council - since 1999. It cooperates with the Nato and European Union with the purpose of joining these organizations.

The shortest way, connecting Central Asia and the eastern countries with Western Europe, (the historic "Silk Road") passes through Georgia. The international transit function of the country is defined by the Baku-Batumi-Jeihan oil pipe-line, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzrum gas pipe, etc. Major ports are Batumi and Poti. There are international air-ports in Tbilisi and Batumi.

There are over one hundred health resorts in Georgia, among them seaside resorts (Sukhumi, Gagra, Pitsunda, Batumi, Kobuleti), mountain resorts (Bakuriani, Gudauri, Bakhmaro, Shovi), spas (Borjomi, Sairme, Java) and many others.

Relief, Waters, Climatic Conditions

The geographic location determined the diversity of Georgia's nature and its harsh and contrasting terrain. We come across lowlands and plains and plateaus, half deserts and mountains of average height and very high mountains.

From, the point of view of relief four regions are distinguished in Georgia: 1. Greater Caucasus, 2. the mountain region of the smaller Caucasus, 3. the plains, situated between mountains and 4. the volcanic mountainous region of Southern Georgia. The difference in height between the peaks of the Caucasus and the nearest settlements sometimes is over 3000 meters. While some places in the Colchis lowlands are slightly above the sea level, many villages in Georgia are situated in the Alpine zone. For instance, the village of Resi (Kazbegi District) is located at 2300 meters from the sea level, the village of Ushguli (Svaneti, Mestia District) is at 2000 meters from the sea level. The height of Tbilisi is between 380-600 meters.

The absolute average height of Georgia's surface is 1508 meters. The highest peaks are Shkhara (5068m.) and Mkinvartsveri (5033m.).

It is the Likhi Range that mainly determines the formation of the contrasting landscapes of the country. It divides Georgia into two parts - Western Georgia and Eastern Georgia.

Georgia is rich in water resources. There are about 860 lakes and 2600 rivers in Georgia (their majority is very small). More than a half of Georgia's lakes are situated in



the mountainous part of Georgia, on the Caucasian Range. The deepest lake is the Ritsa (116 m. Abkhazia). It is at the height of 950 meters from the sea level. As for the amount of water, Lake Tabatskuri surpasses all the others (221 million cubic meters) and Lake Paravani is the largest by its area (37.5 square kilometers, 2070 meters from the sea level, Javakheti). Lake Paliastomi, situated near the Black Sea is distinguished by its low location.

The network of Georgia's rivers is connected with the Black and Caspian Sea Basins. Almost all the rivers of Eastern Georgia form one system with the river Mtkvari and flow into the Caspian Sea. And the rivers of Western Georgia flow into the Black Sea independently. The Georgian rivers are fed by rains, snow and underground waters as well as by glaciers.

The longest river on the territory of Eastern Georgia is the Alazani (407 km-s). It takes its source on the main range of the Caucasus, it flows in Kakheti and joins the Mingeaur reservoir. The Alazani Canal and irrigation system are constructed from the Alazani. The rivers of the Mtkvari basin are as follows: the Iori, the Khrami, the Algeti, the Aragvi, the Ksani, the Liakhvi, etc.

40% of Western Georgia's rivers are gathered in the Rioni basin. The rivers Enguri (in Svaneti and Samegrelo), Supsa (in Guria), Chorokhi (in Ajara), Bzibi and Kodori (in Abkhazia) have their own micro-basins.

Apart from lakes and rivers there are also many artificial reservoirs in Georgia, built with energetical and irrigation purpose (mainly in Eastern Georgia). The most important reservoirs are as follows: Jvari (on the River Enguri), Shaori (in Racha), the so called Tbilisi Sea, etc.

The climate in Georgia is varied. In Western Georgia (Colchis) humid subtropical climate dominates. As for the east, it is characterized by dry and moderate humid subtropical climate. The climate of Southern Georgia is continental. The mountain ranges of various directions and heights, the sea and continental air masses play a great part in the formation of the climate.

Western Georgia is distinguished by a mild winter, a comparatively cool summer, a moderate temperature amplitude, abundant precipitation and high humidity, strong winds, sometimes blowing for a long time. The average temperature in January is 4-6° C.

In Eastern Georgia the summer is hot and the winter – cold. The atmospheric precipitation is less abundant. The average temperature in January is from 2° below zero to 1.5° above zero, as for August, the temperature is about 23-26° C. In Tbilisi the temperature may rise to 41° C above zero, it never drops lower than 23° C above zero.

Natural resources

There are many kinds of natural resources in Georgia. They are used more or less in the country's economy. Of fuel and energetic resources oil, coal and peat are worth mentioning.

There are few oil deposits in Georgia, though it is distinguished by a high quality. Samgori-Patardzeuli, Mirzaani and Supsa deposits are being exploited at present. Oil-prospecting is being carried out in Guria, Ajara and in the Shiraki Valley.



The store of coal in Georgia is 400 million tons. It is mainly extracted by mining. Tkibuli and Akhaltsikhe deposits are important. The Tkvarcheli coal is considered to be the best, though its store is comparatively small. Peat occurs in the Black Sea littoral. Nowadays it is only used in agriculture as a fertilizer.

The use of the non-traditional kinds of energy, the resources of the sun and wind have a great perspective in Georgia.

Chiatura manganese is a resource of a particular importance for Georgia. Its great part is exported.

Of black metals iron was obtained and processed in Georgia from the time immemorial. Magnetic sand (Ureki, Poti-Grigoleti area) is famous for its curative properties.

Gold, copper (Madneuli), lead-zinc (Kvaisa), arsenic, mercury, stibium and other resources are worth mentioning.

Georgia's mountain-chemical raw materials such as andesite, diatomite, barite, refractory clays, etc. are very varied.

Georgia is rich in the following building materials: limestone, refractory clays, cement-producing raw materials, valuable facing material, such as basalt, granite, tufa, marble.

Mineral water "Borjomi" is a world brand. Famous mineral waters "Sairme", "Utsera", "Nabeghlavi" and others are also bottled in Georgia. Tbilisi, Tskhaltubo, Tsaishi and Menji are well-known for their thermal, curative waters. Akhtala (Kakheti) mud has medical-curative properties. Georgia is distinguished by the abundance of natural drinking water.

Forests and shrubberies cover more than 40% of Georgia's territory. The greatest part of the woods has soil-protecting, sanitary-hygienic, recreative functions. Various kinds of flora and fauna occur in Georgia's mountains. They are used in medicine, as food products and in other branches of economy.

There are 14 preserves and protected areas in Georgia. Their area amounts to 1700 square km-s. National parks are being laid out, etc.

The Stone Age in Georgia

A Sensational Discovery in Dmanisi

In 1991, in southern Georgia near the ruins of the medieval city of Dmanisi, the lower jaw with teeth of an ancient man — Homo Erectus — was found. Later in this very place several skulls, some skeletal parts of the early hominid and a great number of the most primitive stone tools were unearthed. These remains date from 1700000 years ago (confirmed by the data of the world's best laboratories, such as the Berkeley Geochronology Centre). According to these data, it was ascertained that the oldest man in Europe had settled down in Georgia tens of thousands years earlier than scholars had supposed. Man appeared on the southeastern part of the African continent more than two million years ago and from there spread to other continents. It appears that the first man settled down in the Caucasus and from here spread to European and Asian continents. That is why one can say that Georgia is the origin of the first European man.



Archeology confirms that man lived in Georgia during the divisions of the Stone Age as well as the remains of the three stages: 280 of lower and middle, and 130 of the upper Paleolithic period. At this latter division, about thirty to forty thousand years ago, the long Lower and Middle Paleolithic period was finished and "intelligent man," — Homo Sapiens — the ancestor of modern man was formed. Hunting and collecting comprised the economy of this man; he consumed whatever nature offered him. They led a herdlike life with groups of twenty to thirty individuals finding food or defending themselves from the beasts of prey together. The natural environment in Georgia was quite favorable for such a life.

The Formation of Tribal Communities

During the late Paleolithic period, the herdlike life of primitive humans evolved into a tribal community when early matriarchal clans were founded. The first unit of this kind was a tribal community occupying an area that had suitable conditions for life, such as natural shelters, food and water.

The Paleolithic phase of culture lasted in Georgia until twelve or thirteen thousand B.C., and from this time the basis for a transitional period from the Old Stone Age to the New Stone Age, the Mesolithic period was created. During this period, climate conditions changed drastically and the modern geological epoch begins.

It is characterized by the development of the earliest settled agricultural communities, apparently occurring first in the Middle East. The change in natural environment had an important influence on the conditions of human life. Stone and bone tools improved considerably, man began to use the bow and arrow for the first time, and hunting became more efficient. The population increased greatly and spread to almost all landscape and climatic zones.

The Neolithic Period in Georgia

The New Stone Age, or the Neolithic, is one of the most important periods of human history. The appropriative economy dominant in the Paleolithic ended and new forms of economy developed: manufacturing, agriculture and livestock farming. Man settled during this age in Georgia. The technology of working with stone improved: use of new stone tools and weapons spread and man began to use pottery.

The Middle East must have been the oldest centre of manufacture.

These new types of economy spread early in the northern zone of the Near East, in the South Caucasus, where there were good conditions for the development of agriculture and cattle breeding. Neolithic culture must have originated here because of the local Mesolithic in the eighth or seventh millennium B.C., which must have lasted until the sixth millennium B.C.. By that time, Western Georgia was settled intensively. Eastern Georgia was less populated during the Neolithic.



The Copper-Stone Age (Eneolith)

From the sixth millennium B.C., the evolution of stationary settlements with established economic systems and peculiar traditions in building and architecture is apparent in Georgia. The ruins of such villages are mainly found in Kvemo Kartli in Eastern Georgia. They are characterized by uniform planning. All dwelling places have a circular outline and are grouped around a small courtyard. Clay was used mainly in building. In Georgia, rich in wood and stone, these materials were almost never used during this period. Apparently, the tradition of clay architecture spread here from the Middle East where clay was an essential building material.

Agriculture was the leading part of the economy; the tools found in the dwelling places and the fossils of abundant cultured plants prove this. By that time over ten species of wheat were known, the majority of them were of local, endemic species. Cattle breeding occupied an important part in the economy. Among the stone tools and weapons, we mainly see knives, cutting tools, etc, made from obsidian. Hoes, made from bones and horns, were widely used in agriculture. The man of this period became acquainted with a metal, copper, for the first time, but continued primarily using stone tools and weapons.

The Bronze Age in Georgia

The Early Bronze Age. The Mtkvari-Araksi culture

From the middle of the fourth millennium B.C., a new stage of human development "the Bronze Age" – began in the East Caucasus. In the Early Bronze Age the so-called Mtkvari-Araksi culture began to spread here, which mainly continues the old traditions. The development of economy, the promotion of metallurgy, the changing of some kinds of artisanship and other factors fostered the rise of social life. Tribes, having this culture, occupied almost the entire Caucasus, except its western part. It extended widely to the south and established itself quite steadily in the Middle East. During the Mtkvari-Araksi culture period, the mountains and valleys of Eastern Georgia were intensively populated as well as the bordering part of Western Georgia (The Rioni-Kvirila Basin). This culture did not extend deeper into Colchis. Different fields of artisanship achieved considerably high levels of development, especially pottery and metallurgy. The rise of the Mtkvari-Araksi culture was triggered by the development of metal industry, for which there were favorable conditions in the South Caucasus.

There is no suggestion of the ethnic identity of the population of the Mtkvari-Araksi culture. Apparently, the people of Caucasian origin, mainly Kartvelian and Huri-Urartu tribes took part in the establishing of this culture. At the beginning of the second half of the third millennium B.C., the culture of the Mtkvari-Araksi ended its existence, which must have been caused by ecological changes.



The Middle Bronze Age. Trialeti culture

In the second half of the third millennium B.C., a new epoch in the development of the Georgian community - the middle Bronze Age - begins. During this period, the so-called mound culture spread, divided into two stages: early mound culture and the so-called Trialeti culture. In this period, the population in the valleys became sparse. They left their dwelling places and settled down in the mountains or places near the mountains. The role of cattle breeding grew, which affected the character of life. The rule of burial changed and the burial mounds became typical. In the early period of the mound culture, the entire Eastern part of Georgia was inhabited. We can see big mound burial places with burial chambers built of stone or logs, with rich utensils, pottery dishes, metal weapons and jewels. In the first half of the second millennium B.C., the so-called Trialeti culture spread in Eastern Georgia. Trialeti is the region of Southern Georgia where such mounds were first excavated. The tribes from this culture were at a high level of development. Different branches of artisanship were advanced, especially metallurgy and jewellery making. The increase of relations with the Middle East fostered the development of this culture.

The large and rich burial mounds of that time had a height of eight to ten meters and their diameter sometimes exceeded a hundred meters. A specially prepared, stone-paved road led to a big burial hall in the central part of the mound. A dead person, who was often cremated, was carried into the hall on a wooden hearse. The servants, sacrificed to their master, were buried together with the deceased. The chiefs of the tribes or tribal unions were buried in such huge sepulchers. The building of such tombs required long and hard work by many people. Religious rituals were also performed. The scene of such a ritual is depicted on one silver cup found in a burial mound in Trialeti. The union of tribes became a necessity because of the frequent military clashes. For joint self-defense or for gaining dominance over other tribes some tribes united. At the head of such unions leaders and trusted people, for example priests were elected. They made the tribal aristocracy and it was the sign of the beginning of the process of disintegration of the communal system.

Late Bronze – Early Iron Age

During the second millennium, the improvement of bronze tools and weapons and their perfection resulted in the development of economy. As the archaeological material proves in the middle of this millennium Trialeti culture ends and the occupation of Georgian lowlands and the development of irrigation agriculture begins. Two great cultural centers formed on the territory of Georgia: Western Georgian, known under the name of Colchian and Eastern Georgian. The existence of such homogeneous cultural centers is testimony to the close relations of the tribes living there.

From the middle of the second millennium B.C., the late Bronze Age begins when great progress is achieved in the techniques of bronze manufacturing, and in agriculture and artisanship. For making clay dishes, they already used rotating hubs that made the work of a potter much easier. From that time, the use of domesticated horses begins. It



was very good for the development of both cattle breeding and military affairs. Warriors on horseback could move quicker and reach foot soldiers easily with their long swords.

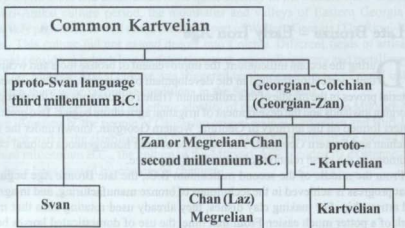
In the late Bronze Age, metal artifacts appeared too. The tribes of Colchi's culture knew iron too at an early stage, but the high standard of bronze metallurgy somehow delayed its wide use. From the beginning of the first millennium B.C., the technology for making bronze articles reached its highest level. We can see wonderful tools and weapons, handy, light Colchian axes, spearheads, dagger-blades, various ornaments and so on, sometimes adorned with a peculiar style of graphic ornaments.

From the middle period of the first millennium B.C., the age of wide use of iron begins in Colchis. Tools and weapons were made mainly from iron. The technology for making jewelry from precious metals also reached a high level of development.

The Origin of the Georgian People

The formation of the Georgian people, like all the other peoples of the world, is a result of a long and complex historical process. We can follow this process from the time when tribes and tribal unions were formed. The Georgian people consisted of the various tribes inhabiting the Caucasian territory from remote antiquity. Some of them were kindred tribes of the common origin, and of those people who came to this territory at different times and mingled with the local population. The oldest Caucasian population, the ancestor tribes of Georgians, showed a certain closeness with the cultural peoples of the Middle East (Sumerians, Proto-Hittites, Hurrians and so on). This can be explained by their both genetic kinship and long relations and contacts with those peoples. Such contacts are corroborated with the oldest Indo-European tribes as well. To make these

Kartvelian Languages Evolution Diagram





issues clear a lot of research has been done and is still being done by many linguists, archaeologists, ethnologists, historians of art and so on.

It must be mentioned that the question of the origin of the Georgian people has always been a matter of serious interest since old times, not only in Georgia but abroad as well. For example, ancient Greek historians thought that Caucasian Iberians came from remote Spain. Herodotus (484 – 425 B.C.), called “the father of history,” had a certain opinion about the origin of one of the Georgian tribes – Colchians. Old Jewish historian Joseph Flavius thought that the origin of the Georgians was connected with Biblical people. Old Georgian historians also thought that the Georgians were descendants of Japheth, the third son of Noah. Nevertheless, the ancient Georgian historical chronicles tell us that the Georgians came to Georgia from the south, from what was called Arian Kartli.

As the archeological evidence shows, people have lived in Georgia since the Paleolithic age. No interruption or any sharp changes can be seen in their evolution, but close contacts and relations with their ancient population of the Middle East definitely existed. Such contacts are confirmed with the ancestor tribes of ancient Indo Europeans. This is clear from the language data.

The Georgian language belongs to a separate language family, called Kartvelian¹ or Iberian² languages or south Caucasian languages. They include: a) Georgian, which is the basis of the official and literary language of Georgia; b) Megrelian-Chan (or Colchian) and the c) Svan languages. These languages formed as a result of the differentiation of the common Kartvelian basic language, the proto-Kartvelian. Some scholars (Deeters) suggest that this differentiation happened in two stages. First, in the third millennium B.C., Svan separated from common Georgian, afterwards, for a certain period the linguistic unity of Georgian and Colchian (Megrelian and Chan) was still preserved and only in the second millennium B.C. these languages (Georgian, Megrelian and Chan) were separated and developed individually.

Kartvelian languages bear a certain similarity to other Caucasian languages such as North-Western Caucasian (Abkhazian-Adigea) and North-Eastern Caucasian (Nakh-Daghestan). Some scholars think that this similarity must be the result of a common origin and that, generally, Caucasian languages are genetically one family, the Iberian-Caucasian languages, but some linguists deny any kinship among them and explain that the similarities come from long-standing contacts.

¹ Georgians call themselves “Kartveli”. They call their country “Sakartvelo”, where “sa” is a prefix denoting country and “eli” is a suffix denoting origin. The stem of the word “Kart” shows closeness to proto-Indo-European “gard” (Gothic “garda”, Lithuanian-“gardas”, Slavonic - “grad, gorod, ograda”, Hittite - “gurta”, and so on), which meant an enclosed place, a fortress. In Western Georgian dialects (Imeretian, Gurian), as well as in Megrelian, this word can be found and means an enclosed place, (an enclosure), a pen for animals. It is possible that this term then meant an enclosure, a fortified place, a wall or a fortress. In the ancient Georgian chronicle *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (The History of Kartli) it is said that “Kartli” originally was the name of a fortress and residence built by Kartlos (the legendary ancestor of Georgians) on the mountain near Mtskheta. Hence, this name was given to the mountain first (“Kartli mountain”) and then to the whole country, the centre of which this place was: “That mountain was called Kartli and therefore the whole Kartli was called Kartli” (Kartlis Tskhovreba).

² Old Greeks and Romans called Georgians (who lived in Eastern Georgia) Iberians and Colchis (those who lived in Western Georgia).



Recently the question of the relationship between the Kartvelian and Indo-European proto-languages aroused deep interest. (T. Gamkrelidze, V. Ivanov). As it is known these languages are not related to each other, but at the ancient strata of their development mutual influences can be seen both in their vocabularies and grammatical structures. This can be explained only by the close proximity of the ethnic groups speaking these languages and their long-standing contacts. Such contacts must have existed in the sixth and fifth millennium B.C. and at that period both the ancestral ethnic group of Georgia and the ancestors of Indo-European peoples must have lived side by side. They must have had relations with the ethnic groups speaking pre-Semitic languages. Such regions are supposed to be the North-Eastern part of the Middle East, the area between the Caucasus, and Northern Mesopotamia, "the land between two rivers." Later from there, Indo-European tribes moved to Asia and Europe. Similarly, the Georgian tribes reached Western and Eastern Georgia.

At the beginning of the third and second millennium B.C., Georgian tribes, speaking pre-Svan language, inhabited Western Georgia and occupied a much larger area than the Svans do now. The remaining Kartvelian group was divided into groups speaking Megrelian-Chan or Colchian and Kart in the second millennium B.C. The Kartvelian tribes speaking the Colchian language forced out the Svan-language tribes and occupied a large part of Western Georgia, while the tribes speaking the Kart language occupied Southern and Eastern Georgia.

As we will see below, these Kartvelian tribes later reunited and consolidated again under the hegemony of the Kartli kingdom. The Georgian language became the language of the Georgian national culture and it has preserved this function up to the present day. As for the Megrelian-Chan and Svan languages, they have preserved the function of locally spoken languages.

Besides the language data, rich archeological material found in Georgia gives us an idea about the formation of the Georgian people. It is very difficult to discuss the language and ethnic conditions in the Stone Age. Nevertheless, some scholars think that by the end of the Upper Paleolithic there must have been a population who had cultural, ethnical and language unity. At about the Neolithic and Eneolithic (Chalcolithic) ages North Caucasian groups seceded from it, which was the beginning of the formation of North Caucasian peoples and languages. A group of tribes, originally living in the uplands of the southern Caucasus and speaking proto-Kartvelian languages must have seceded from it too. There they had cultural and language relations with the ancient peoples of the Mideast: Sumerians, proto-Hittites, Hurians and so on, from whom they learned many things.

As we shall see below, in the first millennium B.C., in the south of Georgia a strong state called Urartu formed. Its population consisted of the tribes of the Hurian origin. After the destruction of the Urartu kingdom, some part of its population became part of the Georgian people.

Thus, the formation of the Georgian people was a result of rather a complicated and long process; in its formation, not only the tribes of the Kartvelian origin participated but the Caucasian and Middle East (e.g. Indo-European, Hurian) ethnic groups as well. In the process of the formation of the Georgian people, as in the way of the formation of other peoples, the merging and assimilation of various ethnic groups took place in later periods as well.



1. Bronze military weapons (sword, dagger, a point of spear) from Eastern Georgia.
2. A bronze Colchis war axe, engraved (the beginning of the 1st millennium, B.C.).
3. Man's bronze statue from the village of Mataani (Eastern Georgia).
4. A bronze model of a war chariot (from the village of Gokhebi, the 1st millennium, B.C.).



1. Armazi bilingua.
2. Uplistsikhe.
3. Dionysius' terracotta statue from Sarkine, 2nd century, B.C.
4. The facade of a Mtskheta crypt, 2nd century, B.C.
5. The bronze statue of the goddess Nike from Vani, (2nd century, B.C.).



Georgia in Old Oriental and Antiquity Age

The Early Class Unities of Georgian Tribes and Ancient States in Georgia

Diaokh

Georgian tribes appeared in the Middle East from the twelfth century B.C.. Great changes were taking place at that time in the South and South-West of Georgia. In the second millennium B.C., there were two great states: the kingdoms of the Hittites and Mittani. The kingdom of the Hittites became very powerful in the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C., but at the end of the thirteenth century they were destroyed by the tribes who had come from the islands of the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas, the so-called "Sea Peoples". Since that time, Georgian tribes became active in the East. These tribes are referred to as Mushkis, Khaldis, etc. in cuneiform inscriptions.

Later, in about the tenth and ninth centuries B.C., the Mushkis created a powerful state, to the south-east of the river Galisi. It spread its dominion across a considerable part of Asia Minor. They were greatly influenced by the Hittite culture.

Assyria destroyed the state of Mittani in the thirteenth century B.C. and started an attack to the north. The Assyrian king Tiglathpileser I (1115-1077) mentioned in one of his inscriptions that at the beginning of his reign 20,000 Mushkis under the leadership of five kings (chiefs of the tribes) came down from the mountains and occupied the northern part of Mittani. The Assyrian king launched a campaign against them and defeated them. Tiglathpileser declared proudly that he had taken possession of Mushkis' fabulous wealth and took 6,000 war prisoners to his country.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries B.C., the Assyrians continued their attacks in the north, where they had a clash with another powerful Georgian union – Daiaens. This union of the Georgian tribes inhabited the basin of the river Chorokhi, in the south-west of what was historically Georgian territory. In Urartu sources it is known as Diaokh. Later the Greeks called them Taokhs. In these three names, the root is the same and it is preserved in the name of one of the provinces of the old region of Georgia – Tao.

Daiaen, or Diaokh, was already a nation of an old oriental type. Within its boundaries in the south was the area of today's town Arzrum too, in the North it bordered Javakheti, and to the North-West its influence reached the Black Sea. In 1112 B.C., Tiglathpileser I, the king of Assyria, made a campaign to the North. The king of Diaokh, Sien, became the leader of the struggle against him, and the "kings" armies of sixty neighboring countries helped him. Those "kings" or chiefs were subordinated to the king of Diaokh and began to fight against the invaders when he called them to arms. Tiglathpileser won a victory and as he himself remarked he had followed the defeated allies to the upper sea, i.e. to the Black Sea. After Tiglathpileser I's reign, the power of the Assyrian state declined gradually and its influence on the northern countries lessened. Diaokh took advantage of the situation and gained strength slowly. The Assyrian kingdom was especially weighed down by the newly created kingdom of Urartu.



The kingdom of Urartu was formed in the southern Caucasus in the ninth century. King Menua, who reigned in Urartu at the end of the ninth century B.C. and the beginning of the eighth century B.C. in one of his inscriptions on a rock, tells us about the battles against Diaokh. He had raided Diaokh and subjugated its king Utupurs, but the king of Diaokh rebelled against him and Menua's heir Argisht (786-764) had to launch a campaign against him again.

Urartu kings occupied the southern parts of Diaokh and built fortresses there to ensure their dominion.

Still Diaokh seems to have been a strong country. The Urartu king Menua refers to Diaokh as a "powerful" state. That Diaokh was a wealthy country is proven by the loot that the conquerors took away from this country and to the great amount of tribute that Diaokh paid to the kings of Urartu. Cattle breeding, metallurgy, processing of precious metals were well-developed in Diaokh. This great union of tribes was headed by a king who was the supreme ruler of the country.

The invasions of Urartu weakened Diaokh, but it was finally defeated and destroyed by its northern neighbor – Colcha – another great kingdom of Western Georgia. Earlier in the twelfth and eleventh centuries B.C. part of the Colchis tribes were under the political influence of Diaokh and were its allies in the fight against the Assyrian kings. However, later on they gradually freed themselves from the subjugation of Diaokh and formed an independent union. It was due to the fact that Colcha attacked Diaokh from the north and Urartu invaded it from the south that Diaokh ceased its existence in the eighth century B.C. Urartu occupied part of its territory and Colcha annexed the other part.

The Old Kingdom of Colchis

The first information about the Colchi tribes in cuneiform inscriptions appears in the twelfth century B.C.. At this time, they still lived in a primitive, communal society. Assyrian sources mentioned dozens of "Kings", i.e. chiefs of tribes there; they gradually united and established a steady union of tribes. This steady union was necessary for fighting against invaders. The social-economic conditions also underwent changes inside the tribes. The representatives of the tribal aristocracy became dominant and subjugated ordinary members of the tribe. Their rule was formed in such a way that it guaranteed their domination. Cattle breeding and metallurgy, especially production of iron, was widely spread and developed there.

The transition to using iron in industry hastened the development of the society and the formation of the state. There were deposits rich in iron in the mountainous part of the coast of the Black Sea. The Georgian tribes living there, the Chalybes, for instance, were famous for processing iron. In fact, the name of Chalybes is associated with the ancient Greek term denoting steel $\chi\alpha\lambda\upsilon\beta\omicron\varsigma$ (gen. *xalubos*) that means Chalybean metal. These tribes had close connections with the cultural centers of the Middle East, which hastened their development.

Rich archaeological evidence clearly points to the high level of development of Colchis at this period. Bronze and iron weapons and tools have been found there. The bronze axes are especially distinguished by their most beautiful shape and decoration.



These axes were used in rites. Ornaments made of precious metals and things of luxury are beautifully made.

Various kinds of tools, earthenware, and other items have also been found there. Thus, gradually, a powerful and culturally highly developed Western-Georgian state, the Colchis kingdom, was established on the southeastern coast of the Black Sea and the territory adjoining it from the eleventh to the ninth centuries B.C.. Urartuan sources mention a number of royal cities in the Colchis kingdom. These sources also show that viceroys ruled separate provinces of this kingdom. The Colchis kingdom spread its rule over a great part of Western Georgia from the ninth to the eighth centuries B.C. It waged war against Diaokh and Urartu. As it has been mentioned above, together with Urartu it destroyed Diaokh and annexed its northern territories.

A myth about Argonauts was spread in ancient Greece. It reflected what the ancient Greeks thought of the kingdom of Colchis. According to this myth, Colchis was a powerful state ruled by King Ayet. Ayet had a splendid palace decorated with tall columns and copper merlons. There were fountains in the palace from which not only water but milk and aromatic oil flowed as well. Hephaestus, the god of fire and the forge, forged copper-hooved and fire-throwing oxen for Ayet, son of Helios. He also made a solid steel plough for him. Ayet kept a magic Golden Fleece. Famous heroes, headed by Jason, set out to Colchis, to this Ayet, to carry away the gold fleece. Their vessel was called the *Argo*, which is why the participants of this expedition were called Argonauts. The Argonauts, after a dangerous voyage, reached the shores of Colchis and presented themselves to King Ayet. The king of Colchis promised Jason to give him the Golden Fleece if he managed to yoke his copper hooved and fire-throwing oxen and plough the field and sow the teeth of the dragon, and then kill the copper-armored warriors who would grow out of those teeth.

Ayet himself did all these things easily. Jason would not have been able to do it if the daughter of the king — the sorceress Medea — had not helped him. According to the will of the Greek gods, Medea fell madly in love with Jason and taught him how to perform this task. After this Medea helped Jason carry away the Golden Fleece.

This myth, alongside the legendary story, contains historical reality as well. For instance, the Greeks mention the high metallurgical and agricultural traditions of Colchis, its powerful political culture, etc. A plough with a steel blade is not mentioned here for nothing. It also proves that metallurgy and agriculture were highly developed in ancient Colchis.

The ancient Greek myth about Prometheus reflects the great service that Georgian tribes did in introducing and developing metallurgy. This myth is very much like the ancient Georgian legend about Amiran. Prometheus stole fire from Zeus and gave it to people. This fire enabled people to smelt metal. The connection of the legend of Prometheus with Georgia is corroborated by the fact that Zeus finally chained this staunch hero to the Caucasian mountain in Georgia.

The eighth century B.C. was a period when the kingdom of Colchis was powerful. It destroyed the kingdom of Diaokh after a series of long battles and became Urartu's neighbor. At that time, wars between those two states began. The King of Urartu — Sardur II — invaded the territory of Colchis twice. First, he invaded the southern territory of Colchis in 750-748, B.C. The king of Urartu settled the captured population in his country. The Urartuans invaded Colchis a second time in 747-741, B.C. They conquered



the royal city of Ildamush where the viceroy of Colchis ruled. The king himself did not take part in the battle; his name in the inscription is damaged and cannot be read.

These wars weakened the kingdom of Colchis. They were followed by an invasion of warriors of nomadic North Caucasian tribes – the Cimmerians. The Cimmerians' cavalry and hordes invaded the territory of Western Georgia like a tornado. They made a terrible impression on the whole of the Middle East of that time. Even today their name in the Georgian language means a "hero", an "invincible person". The word "gmiri" (hero) is derived from the name of the Cimmerians – "Guimir".

At the end of the eighth century a large new wave of belligerent tribes invaded the Middle East via the Caspian Sea coast and Dariali Gorge. They were headed by Scythians who destroyed and devastated the population of this region.

Great changes took place in southern Georgia as well. In 590 B.C., the Medes destroyed the kingdom of Urartu. The Scythians and other peoples of Transcaucasia fought against the Medes together. Part of the population of Urartu moved to the north and settled down there, where they found themselves under the hegemony of Georgian tribes. They gradually mixed with the Georgians and introduced many significant elements into their culture and speech.

After Urartu had been destroyed the greater part of its territory was occupied by unions of Armenian tribes who had lived in the western peripheries of Urartu before that. A great part of the Urartu population, living in those regions, became assimilated with Armenians. After this the Armenians became the Georgians' closest neighbors in the south.

This is also the period when Hebrew colonists began to settle down in Georgia. According to Georgian historic tradition after the king of Babylon Nebuchadnezzar II occupied Jerusalem (586 B.C.) part of the Jewish population migrated to Georgia. Persecuted Jews came to Kartli and asked the elder of Mtskheta to grant them land on lease. He fulfilled their wish and settled them by the Aragvi, at the spring called Zanavi, and the land that they had on lease is called Kherk because of the lease (*Kharki* in Georgian).

Georgia in the time of the Achaemenids (Sixth to the Fourth Centuries B.C.)

The Saspers

The destructive invasion of the Cimmerians caused great damage to the population of Western Georgia. Part of the inhabitants perished. Others left their dwellings and moved to other places. Mountainous tribes took advantage of this and began to settle down in the Colchis lowlands en masse. These tribes still had a primitive, communal system. This caused a significant decline of the development level of the country and ruined the economy. Owing to this, the kingdom of Colchis was not as powerful as before, but in spite of this, the country was still ruled by the local king. Ayet's descendants still ruled the country; they ruled the country with the help of their official's *sceptukhs* (i.e.



viceroys, princes standing at the head of provinces – *eristavis* in Georgian). Gradually the country regained its strength and restored its former might.

The ancient Greek historian Herodotus wrote that four nations lived between the Red and the Black Seas: the Persians, the Medes, the Saspers and Colchis. Colchis is mentioned alongside the most powerful countries in the east in those days – Media and Persia. Another Georgian union – the Saspers – is mentioned together with it too. This reflects the period before the 6th century B.C. It is the period before Persia conquered Media. The Persians conquered Media in 521 B.C. The Persians, headed by the Achaemenid Dynasty, established a powerful state which, besides the territory of Iran, encompassed Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Babylon, and Egypt. They also subjugated part of the territory of Georgia, specifically the southern territories of Colchis and the Saspers. The kingdom of Colchis, “of its own free will”, took upon itself to send to Persia slaves: one hundred girls and one hundred boys every five years. It was not a tribute, but a kind of gift, to avoid an Achaemenid invasion. The Persians did not manage to fully conquer the Saspers either. They occupied only the southern part of their territory.

The Saspers were a union of Eastern Georgian tribes. Very lean information is preserved about them. The name of Saspers was preserved by one of the ancient provinces of southwestern Georgia — Speri — which is within the borders of Turkey today (the town of Ispir). It is supposed that the ancient Greek name for the kingdom of Kartli — Iberia — must have been derived from this name (Speri-Nesperi-Iberi). One of the centres of this Eastern Georgian union must have been Uplistsikhe.

Uplistsikhe is a grand fortress-town carved into rock in the centre of Kartli whose construction began in those days. It is noteworthy that the art of cutting towns into rocks was spread in Asia Minor and in Urartu. Obviously the tradition of carving towns in rocks in Inner Kartli was brought from there. The construction of Uplistsikhe went on later too, and it reached particular perfection in the antique times. Apart from Uplistsikhe the important towns of Eastern Georgia of those days were Dzuelti Mtskheta, Sarkine, Urnisi and Odzrkhe.

Eastern Georgia was divided into separate communal (maybe into administrative - political) units, called *khevis*, headed by rich and prominent persons. Their being rich is corroborated by the archaeological material discovered in different places. For instance, in Ksani Gorge the so called Akhagori treasure was discovered. Also in Algeti Gorge near the villages of Tsinskaro and Kazbegi rich burial grounds and treasures were found.

Great Greek Colonization and the Kingdom of Colchis (Egrisi)

In the sixth century B.C., Greeks founded a number of settlements on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. Such was Phasis, for instance (near the city of Poti), Gienos (near the town of Ochamchire), Dioscuria (near the city of Sukhumi). In addition, a trading settlement must have been built in today's Ajara, near the district of Kobuleti-Pichvnari because of the rich archeological material discovered there.

The Greeks also founded similar settlements on the northern Black Sea coast called Pontikapeyon, Olbia, and Hersonesus. These settlements gained supremacy over the local population and founded their own independent city-states. The Greek settlements in Western Georgia found themselves in a different situation. Not only were they unable to



gain supremacy over the local population, but they themselves appeared to be under the influence of Colchis. The reason for it was that the social-political and cultural level of the people living there was much higher than that of the northern part of the Black Sea coast. In addition, the kingdom of Colchis was powerful enough to hold these coastal towns in subjugation.

According to Greek authors, Colchis was quite an advanced country at that time. Grain growing, viticulture, horticulture and cattle breeding were well-developed there, and bronze and iron metallurgy was at a high level as well. The same can be said about the treatment of precious stones. Archaeological finds prove all this.

Apart from these Greek settlements, archeological evidence shows the existence of a number of local towns. Archaeologists have excavated ancient towns near Vani, Dablagomi in the Samtredia Region and Sairkhe, near Sachkhere. Wonderful archeological material has been found in these places as well. Greek sources point to one of the ancient towns — Kutaya — today's Kutaisi. These cities were situated rather far from the Black Sea, in the depth of the country, and became the most important religious, administrative and trading-craftsmanship centres.

Beginning with the sixth century B.C., locally minted silver money circulated in Western Georgia. Scholars call it "Kolkhuri tetri". Minting money here shows that it was a developed state.

Thus, in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. Colchis was an economically and culturally advanced country with numerous towns and cities, well-developed agriculture, a multi-branch handicraft industry, a money economy and an active trading relationship with the outer world.

For a long time sites of ancient Colchis' cities have been studied by archaeologists. They found particularly interesting and abundant material in the town of Vani. There fortified buildings of an ancient Colchis city were discovered (the wall of the city, gate, fortresses), ruins of palaces and temples, specially decorated altars, rich burial grounds of Colchi noblemen and the simple graves of common people. Evidently, there was a great difference between the property and rights of the aristocracy and the lower layers of society. In one of the sepulchres, dating back to the fifth or fourth centuries B.C., a rich Colchi woman was buried with a thousand golden adornments, apart from silver, bronze and colored glass items. Another burial ground turned out to be richer, where also a Colchi noblewoman was buried. She had been given both the silver and gold adornments made in Greece and locally made adornments of high quality. Their bodies were lying in wooden sarcophagi. The carcass of a saddled horse was found beside one of them. Evidently, the horse was sacrificed to her and what is more important; her three maids were buried together with her in the sarcophagus. They seemed to have been sacrificed with the purpose of their serving this noblewoman in the world beyond.

A Colchi warrior's grave was also found in Vani. He was also laid in a wooden sarcophagus and both weapons and luxurious items and adornments were buried with him, for example, an iron shield, sword and dagger, and a great number of spear and arrow blades. The deceased himself wore precious bronze armor. Among the things that had been put in the sarcophagus, bronze ornamental dishes are worth mentioning. The warrior himself wore a headgear ornamented with gold figures of a horseman and birds. On his wrists, he wore gold and silver bracelets and on his fingers were gold rings, one of



which was a signet ring with a figure of a goddess sitting on the throne and an inscription "ΔΑΔΑΤΟΣ" (Dedatos). This is the name of this warrior. There were two skeletons at the feet of the warrior – a man's and a woman's. These were his servants. In his hand the Colchi warrior had a gold coin minted by Philip II, the father of Alexander of Macedonia. This enables archaeologists to date the sepulchre to the fourth century B.C.. Ancient Hellenes believed that the deceased should give that coin to Charon who would see him to the gates of Hades.

The discovery of such luxurious and distinguished sepulchres proves that the economic and social differentiation in Colchis had begun long before, and that it had intensive trade and cultural relationships with both the Greek world and the Iran of the Achaemenians.

Beginning with the fourth century B.C., the once-powerful kingdom of Colchis gradually loses its strength and its eastern regions become subordinated to another Georgian kingdom – Kartli or Iberia. Eastern Georgian tribes also begin to settle down in the eastern regions of Colchis.

The Kingdom of Kartli (Iberia) from the Fourth to the Second Centuries B.C.

Georgia Before the Formation of the Ancient Kingdom of Kartli (Iberia)

Saspers, as mentioned by Herodotus, was a great union of eastern Georgian tribes who had settled on quite a vast territory but had not yet formed a state. Evidently, it was a union of different tribal – communal units with the rule suitable for the tribal system. An elder (*mamasakhlisi*) headed each of these units. Among them, the elder of Mtskheta was distinguished. As the chronicler remarks, "He was the mediator and the judge of other Kartlossians".

Beginning in the seventh century when the Urartians and Cimmerians destroyed the Mushks' state in Asia Minor, part of the Meskhi tribes settled in the southwestern part and its adjacent regions of today's Georgia. This territory has been called Meskheta since then. In the period of the powerful Achaemenid state, Georgia's southern regions, inhabited by Meskhs, Saspers and other Eastern Georgian tribes, were occupied by Iran. This part of Georgia is called Arian-Kartli, i.e. Iran's Kartli in the oldest Georgian chronicle *Moktsevai Kartlisai* (The Conversion of Kartli). The Achaemenids were not able to spread their rule northwards to the territory of Lower and Inner Kartli. Neither were they able to conquer Colchis, which, as it has been mentioned, sent the Achaemenids slaves as a gift once in five years, of its own free will. However, Colchis gradually lost its strength and, according to Strabo, its kings had only moderate power. It lost some of its territories as well. According to the Georgian historical tradition, Colchis, or Egrisi, had its own ruler in the Hellenistic period who must have been the descendant of the local kings.



The Formation of the Kingdom of Kartli-Iberia

Alexander of Macedonia destroyed the Achaemenian Empire in the fourth century B.C. The chronicler of the "Conversion of Kartli" and Leonti Mroveli in his *Mepeta Tskhovreba* (*The Life of Kings*) writes about the invasion of Georgia by Alexander of Macedonia, his conquest of Kartli and the appointment of his ruler — Azo — there. This Azo, according to *Moktsevai Kartlisai* (*The Conversion of Kartli*) was the son of the king of Arian-Kartli. He settled eighteen families of his pseudo-relatives from his father's domain — Arian-Kartli — in Kartli. "They brought their idols, Gats and Gaim, with them". The researchers see the reflection of the settling of a certain quantity of Meskhs in Inner Kartli in this information. The chronicle says that Azo's heir was King Parnavaz. As for Leonti Mroveli, he says that Parnavaz was a nephew of the Mtskheta elder, Samara, who had rebelled against Azo and in this way, became King of Kartli.

It is ascertained that Leonti Mroveli used the chronicle of *The Conversion of Kartli* as one of his sources, but he had other information and other works as well where the story of Parnavaz's becoming king is presented in a different way. Alexander of Macedonia did not invade Georgia and the Caucasus himself, but it is quite possible that some Greek or Macedonian commander could have reached Georgia and conquered it. The most suitable time for this was the troublous times of his descendants, the so-called Troublesome Times of the Diadochoses.

After Alexander of Macedonia's death in 323 B.C., the enormous empire built by him was divided among his commanders, the diadochoses. This redistribution was followed by fierce battles which resulted in the formation of three big Hellenistic states in the eight decade of the third century B.C.. One of them was Thrace, which consisted of Macedonia, Greece, and the Black Sea coast countries including the northern part of Asia Minor. It was ruled by King Lysimachus, who spread his domain to the east. It is quite possible he was the Greek conqueror whom the Georgian sources thought to be Alexander of Macedonia. Another state was the kingdom of Syria, which embraced a big part of Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia and Babylon. It was ruled by Seleucus, and he was the most powerful monarch. The third Hellenistic state was Ptolemy's Egypt.

In 281 B.C., King Lysimachus was defeated and killed in a battle against Seleucus. Soon Seleucus himself was killed. Antiochus I occupied his throne. Mithridates, a descendant of the Achaemenians and the ruler of Pontus Cappadocia, took advantage of this situation and declared himself king of the Pontus kingdom. He subjugated the eastern provinces of Lysimachus' kingdom, among them Colchis and Eastern Georgia and opposed the Seleucidae. This must have been the time when Parnavaz rebelled against Azo.

Leonti Mroveli in his *Mepeta Tskhovreba* (*The Life of Kings*) vividly describes the preparation and development of this rebellion. It is true that many events are of a legendary character but the main facts must have been taken from real life. According to this story, after Kartli was conquered by the Greek-Macedonians (probably by Lysimachus), Azo, left there as a ruler, turned out to be very cruel. By his order, all Georgians, able to use arms were to be killed. Parnavaz's frightened mother hid her son in the Caucasian mountains where he grew up and finally became a splendid young man. When he returned to Mtskheta, even Azo liked him and enrolled him in his suite. Parnavaz's mother was still afraid lest the conquerors should kill her son, and was planning to flee to Persia with him



when Parnavaz, while hunting, found a great treasure in a cave. He decided to stir up a rebellion against the conquerors using this wealth and contacted Kuji, the ruler of Western Georgia. At that time, Western Georgia was also subordinated to Azo, but it had its own ruler. Svaneti was subordinated to Azo, and it had control of the passes leading to the Northern Caucasus and could bring through them the Caucasian mountain peoples' auxiliary detachments and hired troops. Parnavaz sent a messenger to Kuji for negotiations, and then he himself went to Western Georgia and decided to raise a rebellion against Azo together with him.

A suitable time for the rebellion was chosen. As it has been mentioned, the conflict between the descendants of Lysimachus and Seleucus had reached its peak. Seleucus' heir, Antiochus I, tried to spread his power over the whole Hellenistic world. He opposed both Macedonia and the newly formed kingdom of Pontus. Parnavaz took advantage of this opposition and established a relationship with Antiochus.

Auxiliary troops came to Parnavaz both from Egrisi and the Northern Caucasus. Azo's one thousand selected horsemen also fought on his side. Having lost his supporters, Azo moved to Klarjeti. Parnavaz occupied Mtskheta and the whole territory of Kartli. After this, he sent an envoy to Antiochus. By establishing a connection with Seleucid Syria, Parnavaz wanted to get not only assistance from this supreme monarch but also his recognition of himself as king. In return he promised "to serve" him. Antiochus called Parnavaz "his own son". It is true that this "service" and relations similar to those of father and son did not pass the borders of external recognition, but these relations gave the Seleucids the prospect of widening the sphere of their influence in a region of such a strategic significance as Transcaucasia was. Georgia could receive real help in future fierce battles, and Parnavaz could gain a king's legitimate power for himself.

Georgia's diplomatic mission fulfilled its task. According to the etiquette of the old world, Parnavaz's envoy gave an enormous quantity of gifts to "the King of Asurastan". Antiochus, who sent a king's crown to Parnavaz, ordered the rulers of the Armenian satrapies, bordering Georgia to help him. Azo, fortified in Klarjeti, got auxiliary troops from the King of Pontus. A battle took place between Parnavaz and Azo's troops at the ruined city of Artaani where Azo was defeated and killed. Parnavaz raided the territory, bordering Pontus, and occupied Klarjeti.

The Arrangement of Kartli as a State

After the victory over Azo, Parnavaz declared himself king. He married his sisters to his faithful supporters—the king of Ossets and Kuji. As for Kuji, he made him *eristavi* of Egrisi and Svaneti. Parnavaz divided the country into eight principalities and one military region. The principality was a territorial-administrative and military unit, headed by a king's *eristavi*. A *saspaspeto* was a bigger territorial unit different from the principality, embracing the whole Inner Kartli. Its ruler (*spaspeti*) had a higher position than any of the *eristavis*. Military commanders and commanders of thousand-man units were subordinated to the *eristavis*, and their duty was to collect royal taxes and the taxes for the principalities.



Parnavaz rebuilt and fortified Mthkheta and other fortresses, destroyed by the invasions of Greeks and Macedonians. He also created the cult of the chief deity – Armazi. This cult contained syncretistically the features of several old local deities. Ancient Georgians especially worshipped the Moon deity. They saw it as a warrior-man. The basis of the Armazi cult was this same moon deity, which had acquired some new features as well. Its prototype must have been the old Hittite moon deity (*Arma* meant the moon deity in the Hittite language, and his name must have been introduced by the Meskh tribes who had been influenced by the Hittite culture). An idol of Armazi was erected on the mountain situated opposite Mtskheta where later the Armazi fortress was built.

The creation of this cult was of great importance for strengthening the king's power and authority in the newly established kingdom of Kartli. Leonti Mroveli believes that it was also Parnavaz who made Georgian the state language and created the Georgian written language.

The kingdom of Kartli gained power in the reign of Parnavaz and his direct descendants – Saurmag and Mirian I. The kingdom contained, apart from the historic Kartli, a great part of the later Kakheti, Kola, Artaani, and Klarjeti a significant part of the territory of Western Georgia (Ajara, Argveti, Egrisi, and Svaneti). To strengthen his positions in Western Georgia, Parnavaz built the fortresses of Shorapani and Dimni. Kartli spread its influence in the eastern direction as well. The most important passes on the Caucasian Range were subordinated to the kings of Kartli. Georgia's neighboring countries were also interested in strengthening those passes, for they always expected raids by nomadic-warlike tribes from there. The rulers of Kartli cleverly used this political factor.

The kingdom of Kartli traditionally had good relations with the Seleucid kingdom of Syria. However, in 190 B.C. the Romans defeated Antiochus III in a battle near the city of Magnesia and forced him to conclude a humiliating peace treaty. The rulers of the northern provinces of the Seleucid kingdom — Artaks and Zariadre — took advantage of this and freed themselves from their subordination. They formed two states on the territory of Armenia — Great Armenia and the Kingdom of Sophene. These states took advantage of the inner disturbances in Kartli and seized part of the southern territories of Georgia (according to Strabo these were the slopes of Periadres Mountain, Horzene and Gogarene, situated on the other side of the River Mtkvari (Kura). This was also the reason why a significant part of Western Georgia was lost.

The State and Social Systems of the Kartli Kingdom

The ancient Greek geographer Strabo (64 B.C. – 24 A.D.) gives us important information about the state and social systems of the newly formed kingdom of Kartli. According to his description, "Iberia has mostly densely populated towns and cities. Houses have tiled roofs, they are designed well, and they have markets and other social establishments". The country was actively engaged in trade and played a great part in the trade with the eastern countries of ancient Greece. According to Strabo, a great trading route passed here (the Rioni and Mtkvari Rivers and the Caspian Sea) through which the Greeks had contacts with remote India. This road also connected



Europe with China where silk was brought from. This connection was established in the second century B.C. and is known as "The Great Silk Road".

As for the state system of the Kartli kingdom, according to Strabo, it was a monarchist state. A king's family stood at the head of the country. In ancient Georgia it was called "*sepe gvari*" - a royal family. The senior in the family was the king and he had a title of "Great King". His residence was in the city of Mtskheta. The king's power was passed to the oldest in the family, and later - from father to son. The king possessed the highest power in almost all the spheres of state activities, be it foreign affairs or home rule. Military and civil high officials, the rulers (*eristavis*) of separate regions, were subordinated to him. The *eristavis* were usually representatives of the local high nobility, but only the king could give them this position or change them.

The second person in the country was the *spaspeti*, a member of the royal family who was commander-in-chief and also performed the duty of the supreme judge. At the same time he ruled over the central region of the country - Inner Kartli. The members of the royal family, the princes, occupied high positions in the state. They were viceroys in some regions, and sometimes even *eristavis*.

The princes and sons of noblemen made up the main mass of the guards. The princes were not multiplied only in the natural way. The tradition of artificial kinship was firmly preserved (bringing up children in other people's families and thus becoming related to them).

The king's family possessed a great territory together with its population. It mainly consisted of conquered and gradually subordinated members of communities. Strabo calls them "*laos*" - (royal slaves, the word "slaves" is used here metaphorically). According to Strabo, they prepared everything that was necessary for keeping the king's family.

The majority of the Kartli population were free (or partially free) community members whose Georgian name was "*eri*" (nation). They still partially preserved signs of tribal democracy and had certain economic and political freedoms; in peacetime they practised agriculture, and in war time joined the national troops with their own food and arms. They were to pay certain taxes to the state, they also donated items and paid taxes to pagan meeting-houses.

There were plenty of slaves in Kartli too, but they were not much used in agriculture. They were mainly employed in hard work, such as building fortresses and palaces, constructing roads and canals, working in mines, and as oarsmen. They were also used in various kinds of workshops and as personal servants.

Priests also occupied a dominant position in the country. Big estates and temples and rich treasures were at their disposal. These treasures were collected for years by means of donations. Strabo mentions one of such extremely rich temples, the Temple of Levcothea, and, apart from it, many such temples were found in Georgia by archaeological excavations. Priests, besides serving their cults, guided the ceremonies of registering diplomatic acts, etc.

State rule in the ancient kingdom of Kartli was performed by a body of officials. One of the highest officials at the king's court was that of an "*ezosmodzgvart*" - the man who stood at the head of the king's administration. He managed the income of the state, guided the tax-collection, headed the economy of the kingdom and was also involved in



military affairs. His duty, as the duty of all the high officials, was to take part in wars as well. When necessary he probably also was to supply troops and command them.

Another person – the *spaspeti* (commander-in-chief) of Kartli directly managed military affairs. Locally military affairs (supplying the troops, their registration, and preparation) were managed by the *eristavis*. Commanders of thousand man units, commanders, etc. were subordinated to the *eristavis*.

The Establishment of Roman Influence in Georgia

Pompeus' Warfare in Georgia

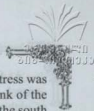
At the end of the second and at the beginning of the first century B.C., the kingdom of Pontus, a neighbour of Georgia, increased in power. The kingdom of Pontus was situated on the southern coast of the Black Sea, and its population mostly consisted of the Kartvelian tribes – Tibarens, Mossiniques, Chalibes, Macrons, Sans, etc. The influence of the Hellenistic culture was strong there and Greek or Macedonian aristocracy held a dominating position. The kingdom of Pontus reached the zenith of its power in the reign of Mithridates VI Eupator (111-63 B.C.)

Mithridates of Pontus conquered a great part of western Georgia, and also the northern part of the Black Sea coast.

The implacable enemy of Rome, which continued attacks in the direction of the east. Mithridates of Pontus tried to unite the peoples of Nearer Asia to fight against the Roman expansion. He married his daughter to the King of Armenia – Tigran II (95-56 B. C.) and made Armenia his ally. Tigran II took advantage of this situation and conquered vast territories in Nearer Asia. The kingdoms of Kartli and Albania joined Pontus and Armenia in the fight against Rome.

In 66 B.C., Gneus Pompeus was appointed commander of the Roman troops. Apart from military activities, he took an active part in diplomatic activities and as a result, Mithridates lost a number of his allies. For example, Pompeus won the king of Parthia over to his side. Soon, a disagreement flared between Mithridates and Tigran II. When Mithridates, defeated by Pompeus, tried to find refuge in Armenia, Tigran did not receive him. On the contrary, he promised to reward the man who would capture or kill Mithridates. Mithridates was compelled to go to Colchis with his small army. He spent the winter of 66-65 B. C. in Dioscuria (today's Sukhumi), and from there he moved to the kingdom of Bosphorus (Crimea). Pompeus stopped pursuing Mithridates for a time and turned to his allies. Being defeated, Tigran II was forced to surrender to the Roman commander. He was deprived of a great part of conquered countries and had to pay enormous tribute. Armenia, defeated and humiliated, was declared to be Rome's "ally".

In the spring of 65 B.C., the Roman army, headed by Pompeus, moved towards Georgia. At this time Artag ruled Kartli.



The Roman army came to the Armazi Fortress. The small garrison of the fortress was unable to put up proper resistance to them. King Artag went over to the left bank of the Mtkvari River and burned the bridge. Pompeus' army occupied the territory to the south of the Mtkvari. Artag tried to conclude a peace treaty by means of negotiations, and promised to restore the bridge on the Mtkvari and to supply Pompeus' army with foodstuffs. The Romans crossed the river and found themselves on the left bank of the Mtkvari and attacked and defeated the Iberians' troops in Aragvi Gorge.

Roman historians describe how bravely the Georgian warriors fought. Nine thousand Georgian warriors fell dead on the battlefield. The Romans took more than a thousand captives in Kartli. Artag sent hostages and precious gifts to the Romans' commander, among them a gold bed, sofa and table. The Romans properly understood Georgia's strategic and political significance, and finally agreed to conclude a peace treaty. They left the institution of kings intact in Kartli. The King of Kartli was to be a friend and ally of the Romans whose duty was to defend the passes of the Caucasus and hold back the warlike-nomads from the Northern Caucasus. Pompeus went to Colchis from Iberia. Having occupied Colchis, Pompeus appointed Aristarchus – a representative of the local nobility – the ruler of Colchis. Coins minted by Aristarchus have reached our times. An inscription "Aristarchus, Ruler of Colchis" is carved on them. Aristarchus was Rome's vassal. His domain mainly consisted of the central regions of Colchis. His residence was in Phasis (Poti).

As for the kingdom of Kartli (Iberia), Artag's descendants took advantage of the civil war in Rome, the defeat of Rome in the battle against Parthia and in the 50-s, 30-s B.C. became quite independent of Rome.

Georgia in the First Century A.D.

In the first century A.D., the kingdom of Kartli became noticeably stronger. This was assisted by favorable political conditions around it: Armenia was weakened at this time and Rome and Parthia fought against one another, using all means to conquer it. Kartli also joined this fight, and not only returned the Georgian territories seized by Armenia, but also tried to conquer Armenia.

Kartli remained a powerful country and took an active part in the political life of Nearer Asia. Rome still tried to preserve friendly relationship with Iberia. This is corroborated by a Greek inscription discovered near Mtskheta in which the Roman Emperor Vespasian (69-79) says that he fortified the walls of the Armazi Fortress for his friend, Mithridates, king of Iberia. It is obvious that this "friendship" depended on certain political considerations.

The rulers of Kartli possessed such an important factor as the passes on the Caucasian Range, by means of which they could take the tribes, inhabiting the Northern Caucasus and the nomadic tribes of Alan-Ossets or other Caucasians across the range. Georgian political leaders took advantage of this situation and tried to expand their territories southwards.

At this period, Kartli tried to expand its territories in the east and occupy the state of Albania.



As for Western Georgia, Colchis was made part of the kingdom of Pontus, Rome's vassal. But in the year 63 Emperor Nero abolished the kingdom of Pontus and made Colchis part of his empire as part of Galatia, a Roman province. Roman garrisons were stationed in the cities of Phasis, Pitiunt and Sebastopolis. The coast was defended by the Roman fleet. All this was followed by the oppression of the local population, which finally resulted in a great anti-Roman uprising.

In the year 69 when in Rome Vitalius and Vespasian fought each other for the emperorship, a great rebellion broke out in Pontus and Colchis. It was led by Anniket, once commander of the Pontus fleet, who had freed himself from slavery. He made the peoples living on the Black Sea coast take his side. They mainly belonged to western Georgian tribes. He invaded Trabzon with an army of rebels, destroyed the Roman cohort and set fire to the fleet. The rebels built fast moving ships called *kamars* and sailed proudly on the sea. Vespasian chose special legions against the rebels and appointed an experienced commander – Viridius Geminus — to lead them. The Romans easily defeated the scattered rebels, engaged in pillaging, then built light rowing boats and pursued Anniket's *kamars*. They overtook them in Western Georgia, at the estuary of the river Khobi. Anniket found refuge with the local prince "the king of the Sedokhis", but the latter captured him and delivered him to the Romans. This was the end of this uprising.

After Anniket's uprising the Romans reinforced the garrisons of their coastal fortresses in Colchis. However, they were unable to check the aspiration of the local population for independence. The discontent of the population of Egrisi was also caused by the fact that less developed tribes who had been living in the mountains attacked the population living in the plain, and began settling down there en masse. They attacked the settlements and towns of Colchis to seize captives and booty. For instance, they robbed the city of Pitiunt, plundered Dioscuria and other places. The Romans did not fight against these mountain peoples; they tried to find a common language with them and even encouraged them to attack people because the Roman slave-owners needed many slaves. At that time, the kingdom of Iberia also tried to join Western Georgia to its state. In this case, the king's court of Iberia relied upon the support of the local population. Rome was obliged to concede and recognize the local authorities to retain this extremely important region as a vassal.

Georgia in the Second and Third Centuries The Kingdom of Kartli

The further strengthening of the kingdom of Kartli was caused by the fact that at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century Rome was turning its attention to the east. It was the period of the Emperor Trajan's rule (98-117), considered to be the Golden Age of the Roman Empire. During this period, the empire reached the zenith of its might and was expanding its political borders.

In the reign of Trajan, Kartli remained "the friend and ally" of Rome. It imposed certain obligations on it, but Kartli profited by this union too. Beginning with the second half of the first century Kartli carried out quite an independent policy and expanded its borders southwards, eastwards and to the southwest as well.



At the end of the first century or the beginning of the second the kingdom of Kartli subjugated the tribe of Dzidrites that inhabited the territory of today's Ajara, approximately from the Chorokhi River Gorge to Kobuleti, extending its borders to the Black Sea and cutting into the Roman Empire like a wedge. Thus Kartli separated the Romans' domain on the southeastern Black Sea coast, on today's western Georgian territory. This strained relations between Caesar Hadrian and the Kartli kingdom.

Parsman II was king of Kartli at this time. He is called *Kveli* (charitable) in Georgian historical tradition. It is the period when Kartli was most powerful. Parsman II acted quite independently in relation to Rome. While travelling in Asia Minor with the purpose of inspecting his domains, Emperor Hadrian summoned the local rulers and kings to see him. He also invited the king of Parthia himself. He gave his guests rich presents. He did it mainly because, Parsman, the king of Kartli, proudly rejected his invitation. Hadrian tried to have loyal friends in Albanians and Iberians, in spite of the fact that they had not presented themselves to him. Hadrian treated many kings with respect, buying peace from many of them. He gave the largest number of presents to the king of Iberia. Besides many gifts, he sent him a war elephant and a fifty-man detachment of warriors. In spite of all this, Parsman did not appear before him. He sent him innumerable gifts instead, including gilded cloaks. The offended Hadrian, to belittle the value of Parsman's presents, attired three hundred criminals in those cloaks and let them out onto the circus arena.

What could have been the reason the king of Kartli had such an irreconcilable attitude towards the Roman emperor? Probably it was because Hadrian did not recognize the fact that Kartli had added territory on the Black Sea coast to its domains. Apart from this, Kartli tried to expand its territories beyond Likhi. There was already a Kartli *saeristavo* in Upper Imereti, Argveti, ruled by an official of the king of Kartli, the *eristavi* Pitiakhshi. Archaeological excavations corroborate this. Besides this, Kartli had become a powerful country and had claims on the rest of the territories of Western Georgia. It had the strength to do this. In 134, Parsman opened the passes in the Caucasus and allowed a large army of Alans to invade the territories of Rome and Parthia. Hadrian tried to settle the relations with the king of Kartli by diplomatic means, but his endeavour failed. The relations between Rome and Kartli improved only in the reign of the following emperor, Antoninus Pius (138-161).

In his foreign policy, Antoninus Pius tried to keep peace with his eastern neighbors. As for Parthia, he had quite a firm position concerning it. He did not allow the Parthian army to invade Armenia. Good relations with the king of Iberia were very important for his foreign policy. Therefore, unlike Hadrian, he recognized the joining western territories to the kingdom of Kartli and invited King Parsman II and his family to Rome. This visit of the king of Kartli is described by the Roman historian Dion Cassius. He writes that when Parsman the Iberian and his wife arrived in Rome, Antoninus Pius enlarged his domain, allowed him to offer sacrifice in the capital, had his statue erected in the temple and attended Parsman's, his son's and other Iberian noblemen's military training. The visit of the king of Kartli to Rome was considered so important that this fact is marked on a marble plate called a *fastia* that was exhibited in the Forum in Rome.

King Parsman II is also mentioned in a bilingual inscription (Greek and Aramaic), discovered on the necropolis of the Armazi *eristavis*. The inscription, known as the Armazi bilingual, contains a great deal of important information about Kartli of that period.



As we see, the king's court of Kartli, King Parsman II, during whose reign Iberia reached the zenith of its power, was oriented towards Rome. He opposed Parthia and fought successfully against it. In this matter, he was helped by the war-like Alan tribes brought from the Northern Caucasus. The king of Parthia – Vologez — was so worried by these invasions that he sent a special envoy to Rome with a complaint against Parsman.

The reign of Parsman II is widely represented in old Georgian historical sources, including the work of the eleventh century Georgian historian, Leonti Mroveli *Mepeta Tskhovreba (The Life of the Kings)*. Folk legends depict Parsman as an implacable fighter against the Persians who defeated Persian giants in combat. As the Persians were unable to do anything against Parsman, they treacherously poisoned him. The Georgian source describes people's mourning the death of their hero king in a grandiloquent style.

King Khsepsharnug followed Parsman II. However, we have very little information about him. He is mentioned in the Armazi bilingual inscription where he is given the title of "a great king", and his official of the highest rank *ezosmodzgvari* (the manager of the king's court). Iodmanagan is said to have been "undefeated and to have won many victories". Thus, it can be supposed that in the reign of this king Iberia fought successful wars. It is not unexpected because at that time both Rome and Parthia were weakened and were unable to attack Kartli. The main goal of the kingdom of Kartli was to preserve its power and the far-reaching borders of its territories.

Western Georgia

The ruler of the Roman province Cappadocia – Flavius Arian – travelled along the Black Sea Coast of Western Georgia to inspect it. He presented a detailed account to Emperor Hadrian about the population living there and their fortified buildings. He relates, "Macrons and Heniokhs inhabit the territory next to the Sans, living in the region of Trebizond. The king of Macrons and Heniokhs is Anchial. The neighbors of the Macrons and Heniokhs are the Dzidrites. They are Parsman's subjects. The Lazis live next to the Dzidrites. Their king is Malassa. You gave him the throne. Apsiles are the Lazis' neighbors. Their king Julian got his throne from your father. The neighbors of Apsiles are Abasks. Their king is Resmaga. You gave him the throne. The Abasks' neighbors are the Sanigs; Sebastopolis is on their land. The king of the Sanigs – Spadaga – got his throne from you too."

As we can see, at the beginning of the second century Western Georgia was no longer a united province of Rome. Principalities (or kingdoms) that were semi-independent appeared there. Such a situation meant great concession to the local population on the part of Rome. As we know Western Georgia — Colchis — had been part of the Roman provinces of Galatia and Cappadocia. But at that time the Roman emperor's court was obliged to restore local rule there for the above-mentioned reasons. The local population fought against Roman domination to restore their independence. Iberia, which was a powerful country at that time, supported them. It occupied part of the territory of western Georgia, and Rome did not put up proper resistance. The empire carried out its traditional policy of *divide et impera* (Divide and dominate) in Western Georgia. Instead of allowing a united royal power, the empire gave power to comparatively small "kings" or princes



and thus, guided by the principle of vassalage, subjugated them. Roman authorities reinforced their garrisons and fortified buildings on the Black Sea coast.

The northern Black Sea coast was characterized by ethnic diversity. It was inhabited by both Kartvelian (Sanigs, Heniokhs, Svans, etc.) and other tribes of Caucasian origin. The latter became especially numerous after establishing first the domination of Pontus and later of Rome. The fall of the local statehood gave a chance to the Caucasian mountain peoples to settle down on the northern Black Sea coast without any difficulties.

As for the central part of Colchis, as we have already mentioned, by the second century local kingdoms and principalities had formed. They were already political units of the early-feudal type. Among them, the kingdom of Lazica was the most powerful. It began to struggle to free itself from the Roman domination and to unite Western Georgia.

Georgia in the Third Century

Beginning with the second part of the second century great changes took place in Georgia's neighboring powerful countries: the Roman Empire and Persia of the Arshakids. An economic and political crisis began in the Roman Empire, aggravated by rebellions in provinces.

There was an acute crisis in the Parthian kingdom as well. Permanent revolutions at the king's court, separatism, uprisings, extremely weakened the Arshakids' rule and finally caused its overthrow. The last king of the Arshakids, Artaban V, was utterly defeated in 214 by Ardashir, a member of the Sassanid family. He declared himself the Shah of Iran in 226, beginning the rule of the Sassanid Dynasty. The Sassanids spread their rule over almost all of the territories of Iran and started important state reforms. They arranged the country according to the principle of firm centralization and reformed the Iranian army; they widely used hired soldiers alongside the army of locals, formed the king's guards ("immortals,") etc. They paid great attention to the creation of one religious system in the country. The Iranians' ancient religion of Zoroastrianism, which never had any dominance over other religions during the reign of the Arshakids, became the state religion and was a powerful weapon in the struggle for the country's unity. The Sassanids paved the way for the subjugation of neighboring countries, among them the countries of the Caucasus, by spreading this religion.

The Sassanids mainly followed the Arshakids' foreign policy, but carried it out more vigorously. Thus, they were a more aggressive power. The Roman Empire had great difficulty in defending its eastern domains. The arena of their conflicts was still Mesopotamia and the Caucasus.

The kingdom of Kartli (Iberia) found itself in a critical situation during the reign of the second Shah of the Sassanids, Shabur I (243-272). It was forced to acknowledge its partial dependence on Iran. For instance, Iberia is said to be the domain of the Iranian Shah-in-Shah in the well-known Persepolis trilingual inscription, made in 262. It said that the king of Kartli, Amazasp, was one of the high-ranking officials of Shabur I's court.

After this Iran was defeated and forced to conclude a 40 year-long peace treaty with Rome in the city of Nisibis in 298. This agreement compelled Iran to give up Armenia. As for Georgia, the king of Iberia was to receive royal signs from the Romans. Thus, the ruling circles of Kartli remained loyal to Rome during Iranian attacks.



Culture in Georgia in the Ancient Period

During the time of the primitive communal system, each tribe had its own patron deities and they worshipped natural phenomena, things, events. People of those times thought that those deities possessed supernatural power and features. They established order in nature and society. They had great physical and military strength. They were able to revive life in nature and regenerate it. They arranged rites and ceremonies in their honour. One of such ritual scenes is depicted on the Trialeti silver bowl mentioned above. The same kind of scenes are depicted on other things and tools discovered by archaeologists. People's lives and traditions have preserved many of those religious rites. For instance, folk festivals and performances such as Berikaoba and Keenoba that are held in different parts of Georgia up to this day and the worship of icons. They represent transformed survivals of those ancient religious rites.

The oldest religious notions are preserved in old Georgian myths and tales. The heroes of Georgian fairy tales often go down into the nether world or go up to the sky where they meet and speak with the sun, the moon, and the stars. They look like human beings and have their features. The sun is a woman to them and the moon and the deity of the weather and clouds are men.

When the Georgian tribes began to unite, their religious notions also became closer and began to merge and certain order and hierarchy were established. The moon deity became the highest deity of the Georgians. He was pictured as a warrior. The bull was considered to be its sacred animal. Therefore, a bull was often sacrificed to him. The bull's horns have the shape of a crescent moon, so we often come across the pictures of a bull's horns in cult buildings and people's dwelling places, or even bull's heads. That the bull's cult was so widely spread in Georgia was the result of the development of agriculture.

According to the ethnographers' research, a triad headed the Georgian astral pantheon. The supreme deity, who established order, was the male deity, the moon. The second one was the sun, or the sun woman, the deity of fertility and crops. The third one was Kviria who according to the rules established by the supreme deity, ruled over the world. Separate branches of man's activities and natural phenomena also had their patron deities.

As we have mentioned, according to Georgian historic tradition the first king of Kartli, Parnavaz, declared Armazi to be the official religion and the main deity of the country. It was the same moon deity of ancient Georgians, only this time it was given the features of other deities as well (Syncretism), and was named Armazi, which in the Hittite language meant just the moon deity. Both this name and many other cultural elements were brought to Kartli by the Meskh tribes that came to Kartli from Asia Minor.

A statue of Armazi was erected on a high mountain opposite Mtskheta. It previously had been known as Kartli Mountain but after that, it was called Armazi Mountain. The idol of the deity Armazi was made of copper and was in the shape of a warrior with golden armour and helmet. It had precious stones for eyes and held a sword in his hand. Nobody dared to approach it, for whoever touched the idol was doomed to death. People offered Armaz as sacrifice not only animals, especially bulls, but also human beings. Besides Armaz's, statues of other deities were erected too, these were Gats and Gaim, made of gold and silver. They were male deities too, and were considered the servants and guards of Armaz.



On the opposite mountain, at the beginning of Aragvi Gorge, the idol of the other main deity — Zaden — was erected. His name was also of the Hittite — Luwian origin and the features of various local and foreign deities were syncretically united in him. An ancient hagiographer remarks about Armaz and Zaden, "Great gods, possessors of the world, giving sunshine, rain and raising the work of the country, gods of Kartli Armaz and Zaden". There, a fortress of the upper Zadeni (Zeda Zadeni) was built, where later on the famous Zedazeni monastery was founded.

Among other deities Ainina and Danina should be mentioned. Their idols were erected by the roadside in Mtskheta. Their names also came from Nearer Asia. The names Nino, Nana and others so widely used in Georgia later on are derived from their names.

Near the town of Vani in Western Georgia an ancient city with a temple was excavated and studied. There the ruins of a round temple with a seven-step altar and other secular and cult buildings were discovered. The bronze statue of Nike, the goddess of victory, and others are notable among the numerous things discovered there.

While the Kartli kingdom was being formed the Georgian pagan religion was put into system, the main deities were given official names (Armaz, Zaden, Gats, Gaim, etc.), and general state festivities were arranged in their honour.

For instance, the day of the Moon deity Armaz was celebrated at the end of summer. On that day, the worshippers from different parts of the country got together in Mtskheta. A ritual march of many people filled the streets, decorated with colored fabrics and flowers. The royal family also took part in this march. A festive sacrifice was offered to the deity.

The kingdoms of Egrisi (Colchis) and Kartli (Iberia) had close economic and political connections both with the countries of the Middle East and Greece and Rome. These relations influenced the cultural development of the country. The Georgian people had a high level of their original culture, suitable for their social position, but it was not isolated from the outer world. On the contrary, Georgian culture absorbed everything that was the best, created in their neighboring countries. Georgia, by its geographical situation, was a natural bridge between the east and the west, therefore it was the place where interesting traditions of the east and of the west merged. This factor has been giving a very peculiar form to the Georgian culture throughout its entire existence.

Strabo writes that there were many towns and cities in Georgia of those days that were built according to the rules of architectural art. Such cities in Eastern Georgia were Mtskheta with the Armazi fortress, Urbnisi, Uplistsikhe. Archaeological excavations fully corroborate this statement. The city carved in the rock, Uplistsikhe, should be specially mentioned. There, among carved buildings having various functions, the structure of an antique theatre has survived.

A study of Mtskheta and its environs revealed splendid specimens of a highly developed culture. Remains of old palaces and temples were found there, and what is most noteworthy, bathhouses of the antique period.

Bathhouses for the nobility of those days were places of recreation and physical training as well. A bathhouse was a complicated building. It consisted of several halls with pools of hot and cold water and special equipment under the floor to heat the air. Clay pipes supplied water. The floor was inlaid, and in itself was a wonderful specimen of art.



Tsikhe-Goji was also an antique city. The Greeks called it Archaeopolis, i.e. an ancient city. The excavation of this site is still on going.

The high level of the Georgian culture of the early class period is demonstrated by the splendid bronze and iron articles, the perfect shape and decoration of weapons and tools, adornments made in excellent taste, household utensils, brilliant monuments made by gold-smiths and beautifully decorated metal articles, that have been discovered on the whole territory of Georgia.

The Early Feudal Age

The Genesis of Feudalism in Georgia

As we have seen in the first century A.D. the Georgian (Iberian) kingdom became active in the world arena. It had close political, cultural, trade and economic relations with the strongest and most advanced countries of the world of those times – the Roman Empire and Iran. All this had a certain influence on the social development of the population of Kartli. The fact of the quick improvement of working tools, especially of iron tools, which spread universally, was of great importance for the economic development of the country. At the same time, such branches of agriculture as horticulture, viticulture, irrigation agriculture, flax growing, cattle breeding, and especially sheep breeding became more and more developed. The natural conditions in Georgia were favorable for these activities; there were plenty of highland summer pastures and lowland winter pastures. Cattle breeding was also important as the main pulling and carrying force were oxen. A good testimony of this is the widespread ox-cult in pagan Georgia. Alongside the advancement of military affairs, horse breeding developed as well.

Such a development of economy and the implementation of new branches required the manpower that would be interested in the results of the labour and in the increase of productivity. Neither a slave nor a free man, especially a dependent community member would show such interest. A slave was forced to work and was given nothing in return. A community member knew only the crops his ancestors had cultivated and had no desire to substitute them with something new. At the same time, he was quite content with the minimum of the harvest that was sufficient to feed him and his family.

The greatest part of the Kartli population consisted of free members of the community (*erisganis*), but because of social and economic development, tribal landowning was breaking down and the difference in how much property was owned by different families was becoming more and more noticeable. An advanced stratum of eminent people separated from the rest first economically, and then socially and politically. The king of Kartli relied on them as his main military force. The thing is that new types of weapons, iron armour, iron swords, daggers, an armoured horse and so on, were expensive and only well-to-do people could afford to have them. Therefore, the main part of the king's army consisted of such wealthy people and a new stratum of military servicemen was forming. They, together with former princes, created the royal aristocracy of Kartli. The king, to



secure their loyal service, gave them a number of privileges, exempted them from taxes, and gave them lands where the dependent community members, "king's slaves", lived.

At the same time, the majority of *eri* (former free community members) fell into decay. It is true that such a sign of old tribal democracy as their individual freedom was still preserved, but they had lost other political rights. From the point of view of production, they were mainly petty producers. The promotion of any *erisgani* (a free member of the community whether economic or social) caused the impoverishment of the majority. The breaking down of the village community and the introduction of the private ownership of the land meant this process in itself. The extension of the property of the "notables" meant that the majority of the *erisganis* lost their lands. There were many reasons for it. For example, not everybody was able to pay royal and other taxes and they gradually became poorer. Their land became the property of the well-to-do notables, their former co-members of the community. Thus, on the one hand, an economically well off and politically important stratum was formed, called notables or *aznauris* in the historical sources, a Persian-Georgian term. The majority of the *erisganis* consisted of people who had lost their land, were poor, or had to appeal to the *aznaur* to get some land on the condition they paid certain taxes. Such people were called *glekhs*, or peasants. The word *glekhi* or *glakha* originally meant a poor man or a beggar. It might have also been a person who lived in a town. Thus, certain economic and political relations were established between the peasants and *aznaurs* that had feudal characteristics.

The relations between the royal family and the fourth genos, according to Strabo, "royal slaves" was the rudiment of feudal relations. The specific feature of this stratum was that it consisted of the communities, subjugated and conquered in different ways, and consequently their free economic development was limited. They preserved the traditions of communal landowning and governing for a long time. These dependant community members did not remain the property only of the royal family. As we have mentioned above, the king generously gave his lands to the *aznaurs* to guarantee their loyal service. These lands were given together with the community members who lived on them. The latter acquired the status of serf-peasants.

The third way of the formation of the stratum of the feudally dependent agricultural workers was settling down the former slaves and prisoners of war on lands. This came from the fact that the slave labour in agriculture was extremely unprofitable. Making a serf-peasant of him increased the productivity and assisted the development of more progressive and profitable kinds of agriculture such as horticulture, viticulture, growing technical plants, and more intensive cultivation of the land.

The above-mentioned processes had been developing for a long time and were already formed and widely established by the third and fourth centuries. However, there were places in Georgia where the population continued to live according to community rules. Such were mountain regions for example.

One of the main defining features of feudal relations was the structure of the ruling class and the class relations inside the country. In the previous period, the ruling class of Kartli had undergone great changes and replenishment. The *aznaurs*, separated from the nation, formed a professional military force. Their main activity was fighting in wars. The royal power mainly relied on this well-armed and well-trained military force. Separate representatives of the *aznauris* took positions of high-ranking military men and civil





servants. They received land and property with community members living there from the king for loyal and able service. Such advanced *aznaurs*, with their social and political position, were close to the old aristocracy of Kartli and formed the so-called great *aznauris*. These great *aznauris* got hold of various influential positions, such as *eristavi* (head of the community), *pitiakhshi* (vice-gerent), head of the fortress, and other influential positions. They subordinated the *erisganis*, and even other *aznauris* of lower positions. Thus, feudal hierarchy, characteristic of feudal relations, gradually formed.

The situation is the same both in Eastern and Western Georgia. In western Georgia kings of kingdoms and princes of principalities had first been vassals of the Roman emperors, and after the kingdom of Lazica was formed they became the subordinates of the king of Lazica.

The Declaration of Christianity as the State Religion

The victory of feudal relations in Georgia coincided with the declaration of Christianity as the state religion. Christianity had spread in Georgia earlier. According to the public figures of the Georgian church, St. Andrew and St. Simon, apostles and disciples of Christ, preached in Georgia. St. Simon died in Georgia, and was buried in "Nikopsia", in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were reburied in Anacopia. There were other missionaries in Georgia as well, but it was St. Nino who played the greatest role in spreading Christianity in Georgia and its being declared the state religion. The Georgian church considers her equal to the apostles.

Extensive information about the activities of St. Nino in Georgia and her conversion of Georgia to Christianity is in Georgian historic sources such as *Moktsevai Kartlisai* (the Conversion of Kartli), *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (The History of Kartli) and hagiographic works (St. Nino's life, etc.), and Armenian and Greek-Latin sources.

St. Nino was from Cappadocia, the easternmost province of the Roman Empire, where Kartvelian tribes were the majority of the population. Nino's parents came from a family of the local nobility. Her father, Zabilon, was a well-known commander of the Romans and her mother Susanna was the sister of the patriarch of Jerusalem. Zabilon had made a name for himself by defeating the Franks¹ and converting them to Christianity.

Nino was twelve years old when Zabilon rejected secular life, selling all his property and giving all the money to beggars he became a monk. Nino and her mother arrived in Jerusalem where Nino's uncle, her mother's brother, was a patriarch. The latter gave Nino as a pupil to Sarah Niaphore (the caretaker of the church) who taught her Christ's teachings. Nino learned from her that Christ's seamless coat was given to the citizens of Mtskheta as their share after his crucifixion and that they took it to Georgia and buried it at Mtskheta.

1. This is the period (the last quarter of the 3rd century) when Franks begin intensive invasion of the territory of Gaul and the Romans have to fight against them. Part of the Franks had already settled down on the north-eastern territory of Gaul. Thus, an episode of one of such battles might have been described in this legend.



Nino arrived in Georgia having met with many adventures. There, with God's help, she began to cure the sick and to preach Christ's teachings. Many people adopted Christianity with her help. In addition, she cured Queen Nana, who was seriously ill, and converted her to Christianity. Mirian, the king of Kartli, was hostile to the new religion and was going to slaughter all the Christians. However, a miracle occurred. While he was hunting, darkness fell and he lost his way. He prayed to his gods and entreated them to show him the way, but all in vain. It became light only when he had asked Nino's god to give him light. After this, the king of Kartli believed that Nino's faith was a true faith and he himself began to take care of spreading this faith in his country. This happened at the beginning of the fourth century. The Christian church of Georgia considers the year 326 to be the date of the Christianization of Georgia.

King Mirian and St. Nino asked the emperor of Rome, Constantine, and his mother Queen Helene to send a bishop and priests to christen the population. Emperor Constantine received their request with joy and sent "the veritable priest" John to Georgia as a bishop and two more priests and three deacons together with him. King Mirian and his family were christened, and he ordered his subjects to be christened too. Bishop John and the priests consecrated the River Mtkvari (Kura) and christened the population of Mtskheta and Kartli in it.

Christianity spread very quickly in Kartli, though in the regions where the population still lived in the communal system, the ancestral religions were followed firmly, and the *eristavi* sent by the king had to use force to make them adopt Christianity.

Christianity was proclaimed the state religion in Egrisi in the same period. The Bichvinta Bishop Stratophile attended the first Church Council held in the city of Nicaea in 325.

The introduction of Christianity played an important part in the life of the Georgian people. Georgia established closer contacts with Rome, and opposed the aggressive Iran. Christianity forbade pagan rites when even human beings were sacrificed. Christianity, as a monotheistic religion, assisted the development of the united Georgian culture, language and literature. The Georgian written language took its final, refined form from this period and spread throughout Georgia. At the same time Christianity assisted the strengthening of the power of the king of Kartli and the consolidation of the country.

The Strengthening of Iran's Aggression Against Kartli

Iran took a hostile attitude towards the fact that the Caucasian peoples had adopted Christianity. Since then it had been trying persistently to establish its state religion, Zoroastrianism (Mazdeism), there. The Sassanids became more aggressive towards the Caucasian peoples. In 338, as soon as the term of the Nisibis peace treaty was over, Shah Shapur II began to wage war in Mesopotamia and Armenia. Rome, weakened by internal struggles, was unable to put up proper resistance to Iran's attacks. In 364, the Iranian army invaded Armenia and drove King Arshak II away. He found refuge in Georgia, and later on returned to Armenia with the help of the Georgian army. The Iranians managed to capture the king of Armenia all the same. After this, in 368, they attacked Georgia, drove away Saurmag, the king of Kartli, and made his relative, Aspagur, king instead of him. The Roman emperor sent his commander Terencius with twelve legions and forced the Shah of Iran to retreat. According to the new agreement between Rome and Iran,



they divided Kartli into two parts. In the part that remained under the influence of Rome, Saurmag's rule was restored and in the other part, they left Aspagur as king.

The division of Kartli into two parts did not last long. At the end of the 370s, Rome had difficulties in Europe. A great uprising of Visigoths started there and it was compelled to leave Kartli, which the Iranians then occupied. The Iranians made their official, *pitiakhshi*, head of the Tbilisi fortress garrison and charged him with the task of watching the king of Kartli and collecting the tribute. The Iranians found great support among the local high nobility, the *didaznauri*, inside Kartli.

Didaznauris were the upper layer of *aznauris*. They occupied high official and church positions, possessing and managing large territories with peasant-serfs and partially free community members living on them. They tried to obtain the right to keep these positions and the territories they managed by inheritance, but the king of Kartli was categorically against it. That was the reason why a serious conflict arose between the king and the *didaznauris* that later turned into an implacable struggle. The Shah's court took advantage of it, contacting the *didaznauris* and setting them against their own king.

In 387 Rome and Iran concluded a peace agreement. According to it, four-fifths of Armenia was given to Iran, and only one fifth of it remained under Rome's domination. This agreement had a very negative meaning for Georgia, for the Persians now had a foothold in Armenia and it would be easier for them to attack Georgia.

The Iranians also seriously attacked the Georgian church, introducing Mazdean rites instead of the Christian service. This process was resisted by the kings of Kartli of that period (the 20-s, the 40-s of the fifth century) Archil and Mirdat, but the forces were greatly unequal and their struggle was unsuccessful.

Beginning with this period Iran began to carry out more aggressive policy towards the countries of Transcaucasia. Its aim was to destroy the independence of these countries and to turn them into provinces of Iran. It was necessary for this that the cultures of these countries be fully destroyed and they were totally assimilated. In 428, the Shah of Iran annihilated the institution of kings in Armenia with the help of the local high nobility – the *nakhararis*. The Iranians brought the Christian church under their influence as well. The matter is that various trends arose in Christianity at those times that were implacable enemies of one another. The Orthodox Church was under the protection of the Byzantium emperor's court, but there were many opposing trends in eastern countries that were supported by the Iranians. There is no doubt; they used it to unite the eastern peoples against Byzantium. In the 40s of the 5th century Shah Yezdigerd II (438-457) ordered to withdraw mounted armies from his subordinate countries, among them Kartli too, to send them to Central Asia where bloody wars were going on against the Kushans. The aim of this decision was to take the warriors away from these countries to subjugate them more easily. The battles in Central Asia required great sacrifice and very few of the warriors, sent there, returned. Censuses were conducted in the countries of Transcaucasia and heavier taxes were imposed upon the population. The church was also to pay taxes.

A great uprising broke out in Transcaucasia in 450 and 451 that the Iranians found very difficult to suppress. The Shah's court was forced to make many concessions. The main thing is that this time Iran rejected the idea of the assimilation of the Transcaucasian peoples as it had planned; it restored the freedom of religion, reduced the military taxation, and taxes in general.



Western Georgia in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries

Lazica was the principality in Western Georgia in the third and fourth centuries that achieved supremacy over other principalities. It gradually subordinated the princes of the Apshils, Abazgs, Sanigs and other small tribes. Later on, the Lazis' prince subjugated the prince of the Svans as well. At the beginning of the fourth century, there were still Roman garrisons in the Black Sea coast fortresses of Western Georgia, but at the end of this century there is no sign of such garrisons on the territory of Lazica because of the weakening of the Roman Empire and its gradual retreat during this period.

As we have mentioned, Emperor Theodosius gave the greatest part of Armenia to Iran in 387. The same Theodosius in 395 divided his empire into two parts and after this Georgia had relations with the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) which was a comparatively less powerful state. Rome had to repulse a strong attack of the Goths; soon the Goths were replaced by the hordes of Huns coming from the east. The Huns, destroyed the Alans, raided the territory of the kingdom of Bosphorus and reached the passes of the Caucasus. The defence of those passes became of great importance to Byzantium, and it can be understood that in this situation Lazica was to be the main support of the empire. The government of Byzantium needed a powerful ally more than an obedient vassal in the east, and it was forced not only to reconcile itself with the strengthening of the kingdom of Lazica, but to help it as well. The Byzantine historian Procopius of Cesaria openly points to the fact that the Lazis did not pay any tribute, and did not obey the Romans of Byzantium in anything. The Lazis staunchly defended their borders to prevent the hostile Huns from invading Roman territory by coming down from the Caucasian mountains and passing through Lazica. Another Byzantine historian, Agathia, characterizes the Lazis in the following way, "The Lazis are a powerful and brave tribe and they dominate other powerful tribes; they are proud of the ancient name of the Colchians and are too arrogant, maybe it is not groundless. I do not know any other tribe so famous and eminent for their abundant wealth, or great number of subjects, having so much land and being so handsome in character and so quick. They have established a state and observe law".

A military alliance alone was the basis of the relationship between Lazica and Byzantium in the fourth and fifth centuries. Lazica was formerly considered Byzantium's vassal. For instance, when the king of Lazica died, the emperor sent the new king the emblems of royalty.

The territory of the kingdom of Lazica embraced all of Western Georgia. It spread to the estuary of the river Chorokhi in the south, and to the Likhi or the Surami Range in the east, and in the north, it occupied the territory of today's Abkhazia and even Svaneti. The principalities of the Apshils, Abazgs and Sanigs, as mentioned by Flavius Arian, were part of the kingdom of Lazica.

The capital of Lazica was Tsikhe-Goji, situated in the centre of the country, on the bank of the Tekhura River. The Greeks called it Archaeopolis (i.e. an ancient city). There were a number of other cities in Lazica (Georgian Egrisi) as well, for instance, Kutaisi, Mokhirisi, Vardtsikhe (Rodopolis). The Black Sea coastal towns had not lost their significance either. These were Phasis, Sebastopolis, and Bichvinta. They still were big trading and handicraft centres. All these towns had close trading relations with Byzantium,



and with Iran and the Northern Caucasus. The rich archaeological material corroborates this.

Up to the present day, intensive archaeological work has been carried out at Tsikhe-Goji, the capital of Lazica. Strongly fortified buildings have been discovered there.

Lazica seems to have weakened at the end of the fifth century. It had lost the Svaneti principality, and some of the eastern provinces (Argveti). This must have been connected with the strengthening of the Kartli kingdom during the reign of Vakhtang Gorgasali and the expansion of Kartli to the west.

The Reign of Vakhtang Gorgasali

Vakhtang Gorgasali occupies one of the most distinguished places in the memory of the Georgian people. Time has added legends to his name, and presented him as a knight fighting for the liberation of his country.

Vakhtang was king of Kartli in the fifth century. He was a boy of seven when his father, King Mirdat, died. The king's court had very difficult problems to solve. The high nobility did not want to obey the king and wished to pass their high positions from fathers to sons. They influenced the church as well. The mountain peoples, living beyond the Caucasian Range attacked Georgia because the passes of the Caucasus were not properly defended after Kartli had weakened and become subordinated by Iran.

In the very first years after young Vakhtang became king, Alan-Ossets and Hun-Turks from beyond the Caucasus invaded and plundered the country. Georgia was unable to put up proper resistance, for the Iranians still sent a great number of horsemen to Central Asia to fight against the Turkish tribes (Kidars, Kushans, and Hephtalites). The country also paid tribute to Iran. A special official of Iran, Marzpan, who sat in Bardav, controlled the activities of the king of Kartli and often interfered in his home affairs, such as doing his best to spread fire-worship and win the influential high nobility of Kartli over to his side.

After Vakhtang came of age, he rightly judged the situation in the country and understood what interests the Iranians had in Transcaucasia. In the first place, it was necessary to take possession of the passes in the Caucasus again and to fortify them because the hordes invading Transcaucasia from the north caused great damage to the territory of Iran as well. Vakhtang asked the Iranian Marzpan to give him an auxiliary force and waged a great war beyond the Caucasian range. The Georgians defeated the Alan-Ossets, taking immense wealth and many prisoners of war. This war gave Georgia control of the Caucasian passes. Vakhtang specially fortified the Dariali gates. There he built a high fortress and made the mountain people living there guard it. After that, nobody could go through those passes without his permission.

After the triumphant war in the Northern Caucasus, Vakhtang moved to Western Georgia. He subjugated Svaneti and great parts of Egrisi. He established several *saeristavos* (principalities) there and subordinated the king of Egrisi, i.e. Lazica.

Vakhtang attacked Byzantium as well. In the second half of the fourth century, Byzantium occupied Klarjeti, the southwestern part of Georgia. Vakhtang returned this territory to Kartli and established his *saeristavo* there, with the centre, Artanuji, which he had built.



From 459 to 463 Iran fought against the rebellious king of Albania-Vache, this ended in Vache's retiring and abolishing the kingdom of Albania (463). The king of Kartli took advantage of this fact, joined Hereti (Western Albania) to his territory, and created a separate administrative unit – Hereti *Saeristavo*. Its centre was Khornabuji, built by Vakhtang. Vakhtang also joined the mountainous part of Daghestan, situated to the north of Hereti, to his kingdom. It was called Tsuketi. He established his *saeristavo* there.

Thus, King Vakhtang, with his shrewd policy, first with the help of Iran and not opposing it, attained great success for his country. He expanded the domains of Kartli from Klarjeti to Tsuketi, subordinated the mountain peoples beyond the Caucasian Range, and joined a great part of Western Georgia to his territories, gaining great authority with the neighboring Caucasian countries.

Iran's concessions to the king of Georgia and Byzantium's comparative passivity were caused by a critical situation in these countries. Political and religious struggles were going on in the Byzantine Empire in the second half of the fifth century. The official orthodox dyophysite Christianity was opposed by monophysites and other trends, which were mainly spread in the eastern provinces of the empire: Egypt, Syria and Palestine. These trends were vigorously supported by the Iranian Shah's court. However, the main political problem of Byzantium was its unsuccessful fight against Goths and Vandals.

As for Iran, after Iezdigerd II died in 457, his sons began to fight for the throne. Finally, Peroz became Shah (459-484).

In the 460s Peroz summoned Vakhtang and the Georgian army to fight against the Huns in Central Asia. In 468, the Persians defeated the Kidarites. Vakhtang distinguished himself in these battles as a brilliant commander and valiant warrior. Vakhtang also took part in the battles against India and its adjacent countries. Meanwhile Kidarites were replaced by Hephthalites, i.e. "White Huns". The situation changed and the Persians were defeated in many battles. Even the Shah of Iran, Peroz, was taken prisoner by Hun-Hephthalites in one of the battles. The Hephthalites released the Shah for an enormous ransom. The payment of this ransom was a heavy burden for the population of Iran and especially for the conquered peoples, among them the Georgians. This fact even more strengthened anti-Iranian feelings in Kartli.

Vakhtang returned to Kartli only seven years later, in the 470s. He found the situation had changed. The Persians again tried to subjugate the Caucasian peoples. The local government remained only in Kartli, the institution of kings in Armenia and Albania had been abolished long before (in 428 in Armenia and 463 in Albania). This was prepared for Kartli as well. The Shah of Iran tried to take advantage of the opposition between the king of Kartli and the local high nobility. In this respect, Varsken Pitiakhshi's example is very characteristic. This situation is described by the fifth century author, Iakob the Priest.

Varsken was the *pitiakhshi* of Lower Kartli (Kvemo Kartli). He went to the Shah of Iran in 466; to win him over to his side; he rejected Christianity and adopted Mazdeism. There is no doubt; he wanted to free himself from being subordinated to the king of Kartli in this way, and with Iran's assistance, to gain more rights in his domain. His plan was opposed by his wife, Shushanik, who was the daughter of a famous Armenian commander-in-chief, Vardan Mamikonyan. In spite of being cruelly tortured, Shushanik did not obey Varsken's demands and died as a saintly martyr after many years of imprisonment and torture.



There were quite a few of other traitorous noblemen like Varsken. They could not bear King Vakhtang's powerful rule. He, as a certain historian says: "ruled like a lion among sheep".

In this period, the church of Kartli also had a feudal organization. Churches and monasteries had much property, mainly donated lands. High officials of the church — archbishops, bishops, and fathers-superior of monasteries — managed these. The representatives of the high nobility usually occupied such high positions in church, and it is quite clear that they defended their interests. The Shah's court of Iran tried to find a common language with both secular feudals and the highest church authorities, and set them against their king. At this time, Archbishop Michael was head of the Georgian church. He had obtained great wealth in an illegal way.

Having returned to Georgia, King Vakhtang turned his attention first to the church. He decided to reorganize it thoroughly and began to dismiss unmanageable and dishonest bishops. At the same time, Vakhtang established new bishoprics and made smaller units of the old ones. He wanted to dethrone Archbishop Michael too. This fact enraged Michael and he insulted king Vakhtang. When the king came to him and bent to kiss the lower part of his attire, Michael kicked him in the face, breaking one of his teeth. The incensed king drove Michael away from Georgia. He was sent to the Patriarch of Constantinople to be judged. At the same time, the king asked the emperor and the Constantinople patriarch to subordinate the Georgian church to him, to put a catholicos at the head of the Georgian church and give it the right of autocephaly. Constantinople agreed to Vakhtang's demands. Michael was sent to a monastery. A Georgian catholicos, Petre, a person having a close relationship with Vakhtang, was sent to Georgia. The Patriarch of Antioch enthroned him. Constantinople made such a concession because it understood the complicated political situation in the Near East of those times and the important role Georgia played in defending the interests and positions of Christianity in Transcaucasia.

Catholicos Petre arrived in Georgia accompanied by his closest co-worker and assistant, Samoel, who was appointed archbishop of Mtskheta. Twelve more other bishops were made bishops in various bishoprics. This reorganization turned the Georgian church into the most devoted assistant of the king and supported all his undertakings. There were about six or seven bishoprics in Georgia before the reorganization and about twenty after it.

The town and fortification construction works started by Vakhtang were also aimed at strengthening the king's power and weakening the influence of the high nobility. For instance, the city of Ujarma was built during his reign. It was situated in the river Iori Gorge and was of great political and administrative importance. The city of Cheremi, also built in Vakhtang's time, was also very important in this respect. It was also situated in Kakheti and became the most important place in the king's domains. Vakhtang began large-scale construction works in Tbilisi and decided to move the political centre of the old aristocracy from Mtskheta to Tbilisi, making it the country's capital.

Before the insurrection started, Vakhtang had attacked the noblemen who served the Persians and opposed him. In 482 the leader of these traitor noblemen, Varsken Pitiakhshi was killed by his order. The king of Kartli showed everybody by this act that he was beginning to fight not only for liberating the country politically, but against Mazdeism as well. Killing Varsken meant rebellion against Persia. He selected the right time. Iran's position in Central Asia was very complicated and its main forces were taken from



Transcaucasia there. The insurrection against the Iranians had already begun in the neighbouring Albania, and Armenia was on the verge of rebellion as well. Vakhtang hoped that he would be able to bring the Huns from beyond the Caucasian Range to help him in the fight against Iran.

In the first year of the insurrection, Vakhtang defeated Iran's army and drove them away from Kartli. Next year, the Iranians sent two large armies to Kartli and Armenia. Vakhtang retreated to the Armenian mountains to unite the Armenian and Georgian forces. At the same time, he was expecting auxiliary forces of the Huns, but only a three-hundred men unit of them came. At the same time the Armenians, led by Vahan Mamikonyan, also defeated the Iranians in the battle of Nershepat and started towards Vakhtang to help him. After the Georgian and Armenian forces had united, Vakhtang was for acting courageously and demanded that they immediately descend to the lowlands and start the fight against the Iranians. However, the Armenian commanders were cautious and did not want to start fighting until the main force of Huns arrived. At the same time, there was no unity in the Armenian army. The situation was the same in the Georgian army. Many of the Nakhararies took part in the war because they were afraid and forced to take part in the insurrection and were ready to take the side of the Iranians at the very first opportunity. They had let the Iranians know about it before the battle started, and when the army of the allies attacked the enemy in the valley of Charmani, on the bank of the Mtkvari River, the traitors left the battlefield, causing disorder among the warriors. This affected the fate of the battle. In spite of the fact that the remaining army commanded by Vakhtang Gorgasali and Vahan Mamikonyan fought bravely, the Iranians won a victory. However, the Iranians did not take advantage of this victory to the end because their commander, Mihran, was ordered to return to Iran in September of the same year.

In the spring of 484, a large Iranian army headed by Zarmihr Hazaravukht, a famous commander, invaded Kartli. Hazaravukht had orders from the Shah "either to capture the king of Kartli Vakhtang, or kill him, or drive him away from the country". Many local nobles went to him to show their loyalty. Hazaravukht promised those who would support the Iranians much favour. King Vakhtang was forced to go to Egrisi.

Meanwhile Shah Peroz was killed in the battle with the Hephthalites. Once he heard this news, Hazaravukht returned to Iran. The Iranians were forced to make many concessions in Transcaucasia; for instance, they appointed Vahan Mamikonyan *marzpan* of Armenia. They also stopped persecuting Christianity and restored the local king's power in Albania. Vakhtang also returned to Eastern Georgia, but he did not reconcile with Iran. He strongly took the side of Byzantium, and when the Persians demanded that he take part in the war against Byzantium, he refused to do it. In answer to this, the Iranians brought a new army into Kartli. They raided a number of towns and encamped on the bank of the river Iori, in the Samgori Valley. At dawn, Vakhtang attacked the enemy's camp, and even killed the Shah's son. Vakhtang inspired fear in his enemy by his bravery. Vakhtang wore a helmet with a wolf's head depicted on it. Wherever he appeared the Persians started shouting "Avoid Gorgasari" (*Gorg* - wolf, *sar* - head, means a "wolf's head" in Persian and ran away as fast as they could. Vakhtang wore a helmet with a wolf's head depicted on it. That was why he was called Gorgasali). The king was an example to Georgian warriors, encouraged them and assured them that they would win. According to the legend, a traitor killed him. Vakhtang Gorgasali, killed in the battle for



the independence of his country, was buried with great honor in Mtskheta, in the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, which he had built. A life-size portrait of himself was depicted on his tombstone. His armour was kept in the Georgian treasury for a long time, and the Georgian flag that led the Georgian army into battle was called *Gorgasliani*.

As has been mentioned, Vakhtang Gorgasali was also famous for his construction activities. A number of towns, fortresses, and churches and monasteries were built in his reign. One must specially note that he built Tbilisi and made it the capital. The Georgian people made up a beautiful legend in connection with this. Once, King Vakhtang was hunting in the environs of Tbilisi. In those days, there still was a dense forest there. Suddenly a most beautiful male pheasant flew out of a bush. The king chased it with his specially trained hawk. Soon both the pheasant and the hawk disappeared behind the trees. After a long search, they were found in a pool of water. The water was hot and flowed from the ground. The king liked the place and the natural hot water and ordered a city built there. And indeed, there is a lot of hot sulphur water there which has been used by the population for bathing and curative purposes since the time immemorial. The city was called Tbilisi because of the warm water, *tpili* means warm in old Georgian. According to Vakhtang's will, his heir Dachi finished building Tbilisi, and moved the capital there from Mtskheta.

The Annihilation of the Institution of King in Kartli Kartli in the Sixth Century

After Vakhtang's death, his heirs Dachi and Gurgen continued his policy – to side with Byzantium and to fight against the aggression of Iran. However, changes in the situations abroad and at home made it extremely difficult to carry out this policy.

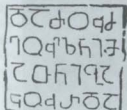
By the beginning of the sixth century, the Byzantine Empire and the Sassanian Iran had each ended acute social crises, repulsed the invasions of savage tribes and renewed wars against each other with fresh strength. One of the main reasons for these wars was to take control of Transcaucasia. Both parties tried to make contacts with strengthened feudal lords to reach their aims. In this respect, Iran was more successful. It is known that the Iranians managed to abolish the institution of kings in Armenia with the assistance of the local *nakhharars*. The king's institution was also ended in Albania in 510. Georgia was the only country that still had local kings. Iran turned all its forces to the final conquest of Kartli and Egrisi.

According to the peace treaty concluded in 506, Byzantium made a number of concessions to Iran. Encouraged by this, the Iranian Shah exerted more pressure on the kingdom of Kartli. The emperor of Byzantium promised to help the king of Kartli, but when the Iranian army invaded Georgia, the Byzantines sent only a small force. King Gurgen could do nothing but find refuge in Egrisi with his family and the noblemen loyal to him.

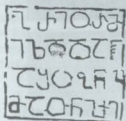
After this, the Shah of Iran did not allow the Georgians to have their own king. They occupied the country and turned it into one of their administrative units. Marzpan, having important administrative and juridical rights, was the head of Kartli. The Iranian forces were placed in the important cities of Kartli and these cities were subordinated to Iranian



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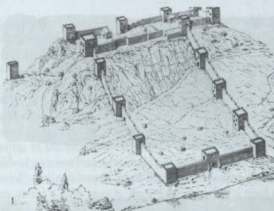
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2

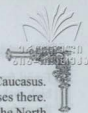
1. A fragment of the inscription on Bolnisi Sion (494).
- 2, 3. The mosaic inscriptions of the Georgian monastery in Palestine.



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1. A city-fortress Ujarma.
2. The image of a Pitiakhshi (the ruler of a peripheral region, a vice-roy) and a flowery cross.
3. Bolnisi Sion.
4. The coin of the ruler of Kartli (the end of the 6th century).



heads of fortresses. The Iranians paid special attention to mountain passes in the Caucasus. They took their defence and strengthening in their hands and built new fortresses there. The Iranians made it impossible for the Georgians to contact nomadic tribes of the North Caucasian vast valleys for assistance.

Military force alone was not sufficient to guarantee Iran's domination in Kartli. As it has been mentioned, the main reason for the conflict between the king in Kartli and the high nobility was the latter's wish to have their high positions, for instance, of *eristavis*, always, and to pass them from father to son by inheritance. The Iranians bestowed this right to the *eristavis* and signed it by special deeds. They also changed their attitude towards the Georgian church. With the assistance and support of the Iranians the Monophysite anti-Chalcedonite trend of Christianity opposed to the orthodox Byzantine (dyophysite-Chalcedonite) belief became dominant in the Georgian church. After this, they not only stopped persecuting Christianity, but granted the churches and monasteries many rights and privileges. In this way, the Iranians won the favor of the influential circles of Kartli and the loyalty of the Georgian high nobility and the Georgian church. As for the vast layers of the Kartli population, paying large tributes and military service was a heavy burden to them.

The Georgian hagiographic work *The Martyrdom of Evstathy of Mtskheta*, written in the sixth century, clearly shows that the Marzpan of Kartli ruled the country with the help of the high nobility of Kartli and the highest church circles. For instance, the *pitiakhsh* of Kartli, the Kartli elder, the *eristavis* of Kartli and even the *catholicos* of Kartli are in the service of Iran. However, Iranian rule oppressed the majority of the population and the fire of rebellion had never gone out there.

Great Wars in Egrisi

In the second half of the sixth century, Western Georgia was subordinated to Iran with Kartli's help. Byzantium did her best to restore her dominance in Western Georgia. After Vakhtang Gorgasali had opposed Iran and turned to Byzantium, the Byzantines hoped that they would regain their influence over Georgia. Nevertheless, after Vakhtang's death and the peace treaty concluded with Iran in 506, Iran retained its political influence in all of Georgia.

Meanwhile Byzantium gradually regained its strength. During the reign of Justinian, Byzantium conquered the greatest part of the territories of the Western Roman Empire after a long war, and for a short period, he almost restored the old frontiers of the Roman Empire from the Columns of Hercules (Gibraltar) to Lazica. However, in the east his achievements in the wars against the Sassanid Iran were less successful.

In the very first year of Justinian's ascension to the throne, Byzantium began its first war against Iran, which ended in 532 with the so-called "Termless Peace Treaty", i.e. establishing permanent peace. According to this treaty, Western Georgia became a vassal of Byzantium and Constantinople recognized Iran's domination over Eastern Georgia. "The Termless Peace treaty" having been concluded, Byzantium brought her garrisons to Western Georgia. This caused great discontent among the local population. A fortress city was built by Justinian's order at the southern border of the country. A road came into





Egrisi from there via the Black Sea coast. The inner fortress of this city was built on a high rock and the city was called Petra (πέτρα, means a rock in Greek). Justinian placed the main garrison there. This was also the seat of the commander of the Byzantine troops – *strategos*. His duty was to watch the activities of the king of Egrisi.

Byzantine officials were notorious for their greed, avarice and cheating. They robbed the population of foreign countries mercilessly. They troubled the local population with their unruly and wilful behavior. The king of Egrisi was unable to act independently. It was very insulting for the proud Egrisians, and they developed hostile feelings towards them.

The king of Egrisi, Gubaz II, decided to seek Iran's help in driving the Byzantines away and clandestinely sent an envoy to the Shah of Iran, Khosro I Anushirvan (531-579). The representatives of Egrisi promised Khosro if he helped Egrisi in the war against Byzantium, they would be able to find a way to the Black Sea and threaten their capital from there as well.

Khosro I liked the Egrisian's proposition. The connection with Egrisi and moreover conquering it would bring great profit to Iran. Besides the above-mentioned facts, in such a case Iberia would also become more obedient, for the Ibers would not have supporters in case they started a rebellion.

In 542, Khosro Anushirvan entered Egrisi with his army. The Lazis themselves guided the Persians. King Gubaz met the Shah of Iran with his army in the middle of Colchis. The united forces of the Persians and Egrisians attacked the fortress-city Petra first. After a bloody battle, they seized Petra and a Persian garrison was stationed there. The Iranians occupied other fortresses too, but news arrived that the Byzantine commander Velizar had invaded Iran. Khosro I had to go back immediately. In 545, Byzantium and Iran concluded a five-year peace treaty.

Khosro Anushirvan used this agreement to settle down in Western Georgia. His aim was to drive away the population of Egrisi and settle Iranians and other tribes who were loyal to him there. It was necessary to get rid of King Gubaz to reach this aim. He ordered one of his commanders to do it. The commander, on his part, tried to use a Lazi nobleman who was a great enemy of King Gubaz. But this Lazi nobleman, Parsans, having learned about the Iranians' treacherous intention, forgot about his personal enmity, holding the interests of his country higher than his own personal ambitions, and informed King Gubaz. After this to continue to have friendly relations with Iran was impossible, and Gubaz turned to Caesar Justinian and offered Byzantium to be its ally again. Justinian was pleased with such a turn of events and sent new troops to Egrisi. In 549, a war for Egrisi between Byzantium and Iran broke out with a new force. This time the victory was on the side of Byzantium because the Egrisians supported them and fought together with them.

In 550, Khosro Anushirvan sent a new numerous army to Egrisi, but the united forces of Egrisi and Byzantium inflicted a crushing defeat on the Iranians. The Iranian commander and thousands of warriors were killed in the battle, and the others fled to save themselves. The allies got hold of the whole camp of the Iranians. After this, the Iranians' army remained only in Petra. The Egrisians demanded that the fortress be attacked immediately, but the Byzantine commander, Dagistus, did not agree to do it. At the request of the



Egrisians, the emperor called Dagistus back to Constantinople and put him in prison, and sent a new commander to Egrisi.

In 551, the Byzantines took Petra after a bloody battle and pulled it down to its foundation. In answer to this, the Iranians besieged the capital of Egrisi, Tsikhe-Goji, i.e. Archaepolis, but the Byzantine army that was in the city inflicted a crushing defeat on them. The Persians lost 4,000 soldiers and three commanders in this battle.

The Persians continued fighting in spite of this, ravaging and devastating the country. The Byzantine commanders acted extremely sluggishly, thinking more about obtaining booty than ending the war with victory. In 552, Byzantium and Iran concluded an armistice. According to its terms, Byzantium was to pay compensation to Iran.

King Gubaz blamed the Byzantine commanders for the failure, blaming their mediocrity and avarice. He informed the emperor about it. The insolent commanders did not like it and decided to get rid of King Gubaz. They invited the Georgian king to their camp as though for a consultation and killed him treacherously (554). After this, the Byzantines set out to take Onoguris, but were crushingly defeated.

The treacherous assassination of King Gubaz filled the whole Lazica with indignation. The people were enraged at the Byzantine commanders. The Egrisi noblemen got together to speak about this extremely important matter. Two ideas were expressed at this gathering. A Colchian nobleman called Ayet who was an old enemy of the Romans and the supporter of the Iranians insistently defended one. The historian Agathia recorded his speech. "The old dignity of the Colchian people has disappeared," said Ayet, "and we shall not be able to dominate others from today . . . I would wish that the state of Colchis had its former strength, that it did not need outside help of foreigners, that it relied only upon itself in war and peace. But as we have become so weak because of the situation, or because fortune has turned her back on us, or because for both those reasons that we are other state's subordinates, we had better be under the protection of the country that is more benevolent and that always regards its allies with favour." Ayet appealed to his compatriots to take revenge on the Byzantines for assassinating King Gubaz. Ayet's brilliant speech enflamed the noblemen and they unanimously shouted to take the side of the Persians. However, the leader of the opposing party, Partadze, who was greatly respected in Colchis and was a very influential person, stopped the people with a speech no less brilliant than that of Ayet and showed the rashness of this act. "If King Gubaz were here, even he would not approve of it", said the orator. "We shouldn't obey our feelings and run like slaves, we should imbue ourselves with the consciousness of freedom of the Colchian people, we must bravely endure our misfortune and do nothing dishonest and violating our ancestors' traditions". Partadze emphasized that the commanders had killed Gubaz, and the Caesar had nothing to do with it. He proposed to let the Caesar know what had happened and see what his answer would be. "The Romans are more acceptable, for the Iranians will never reconcile to the fact that we have different faiths", he said.

Finally, Partadze's idea won. A delegation of Lazi noblemen was sent to Justinian. They demanded that the killers be punished. At the same time, they requested that Gubaz's younger brother Tsate be made king. Tsate was in Constantinople at that time. Justinian satisfied all the demands of the Egrisians. Tsate II was made king of Egrisi. He was equipped with all the regalia of being a king and sent to his native country. Senator



Athanasius, known for his honesty, followed him. He was to investigate the case of Gubaz's assassination and punish the guilty persons.

Tsate II was warmly welcomed in Egrisi. The commanders who had murdered Gubaz were arrested, then tried publicly and sentenced to death. The Byzantines, together with the Lazis, defeated the Persians many times. They finally forced Khosro Anushirvan to give up Egrisi, and conclude a fifty-year-long peace treaty with the Byzantines in the city of Dara, in 562. Iran gave up Egrisi and yielded it to Byzantium.

Liberating Kartli from the Domination of the Iranians and Establishing the Rule of *erismtavari* (head of the nation)

After the Iranians had been defeated in Egrisi, fighting against them started in Kartli as well. The high-rank noblemen of Kartli had been associated with the conquerors at the beginning. Now that a national-liberation movement was spreading widely in the country, they could not be outsiders, and very soon, they even turned out to be at the head of this movement. The idea of restoring the national government had always been alive among the population of Kartli.

In 571, an insurrection against Iran broke out in neighboring Armenia. In 572, Georgians, headed by Gurgen, the local *eristavi*, (Gurgen or Guaram) helped the Armenians. The leaders of the insurrection were aware that they would not be able to beat the Iranians with their own forces alone; therefore they turned to Emperor Justinian II (565-578) for assistance. The caesar was pleased with the request and promised to help them. And indeed the insurrection, with the assistance of Byzantium, turned into a vast people's movement and was successful for the peoples of Transcaucasia. Kartli gradually freed herself from the domination of Iran. The local *ersitavis* began organizing their rule over the country according to their views and customs. They had no wish to restore the old institute of kings. Therefore, the *eristavis* and the high nobility elected the highest authority of Kartli, *erismtavari* (head of the nation). It was their leader of the insurrection, Guaram, a descendant of the old royal family of Kartli. The Emperor of Byzantium recognized this act too, and he bestowed a title of Kurapalates on Guaram, a title of the Byzantine Emperor's court. On their part, the Kartli *ersitavis* were promised that the new ruler would not deprive them of the right to hand down their *saeristavos* to their sons to rule after their death. The emperor confirmed this promise. Thus, the newly born *erismtavari* was a successor to the annulled institution of kings in Kartli. This was not the old sovereign with unlimited rights. He was only head of the *eristavis* who would not restrict their rights in their *saeristavos*. As a chronicler remarks, the *erismtavaris* did not allow themselves to take the name of a king (or were not able to do it), for neither the Byzantines, nor the Iranians allowed them to do it, nor even their own *eristavis*. The Kartli high nobility wanted to have the head of their state who would only be the first among them, and not a monarch with limitless rights; they would only "obey" him.

The Iranians did not want to surrender Kartli and Armenia so easily. Fighting went on during the whole seventies and eighties. It was very difficult for Byzantium to wage this war and it was compelled to surrender Kartli to Iran. On its part, the Shah's court also



made some concessions and to win the Kartli population over to its side, agreed to recognize the power of *erismtavari*, established by the local high nobility.

The power of the Kartli *erismtavari* acquired a more established form in the times of Guaram's heir, Stephanos I. Stephanos was bestowed the title of patrician by Caesar Mavricius (582-602), and his brother Demetre and his son Adarnasse were conferred the title of *vipatos*.

Kartli had regained its independence. Byzantium only requested that Kartli be its ally and have the same faith. Kartli rejected the Monophysite faith and adopted the Byzantine orthodox dyophysite faith.

In 604, a new war broke out between Byzantium and Iran in which Byzantium was defeated and Iran took control of Kartli again. In spite of this, Kartli retained wide inner self-government and freedom of faith. Unlike Armenia, where mainly the monophysite faith dominated, Kartli was unshakable in its dyophysite faith. This became the reason for a religious split between the Georgians and Armenians.

In 608, the Armenian Catholicos Abram issued "a universal epistle" in which he forbade his subordinate Armenians to have anything to do with Georgians and Albanians, except buying and selling things. It was an extremely negative act, for since that time all religious connections ceased between the Georgians and Armenians which had united them in the struggle against their conquerors before.

Iran's tolerant religious policy also soon underwent a change. Iran's Shah Khosro II (591-628) drove the Byzantines out of Mesopotamia in several bloody battles and invaded Syria. In 611 he occupied Antioch, in 613 he seized Damascus and Jerusalem in 614. He convened a Christian church council that established that all the Christians who were subordinated to Iran were to take the antichalcedonite, i.e. the Monophysite Armenian faith.

An energetic and gifted military commander, Heraclius (610-641), ascended the throne in such a critical situation for Byzantium. He managed to improve this situation by carrying out a number of measures of political importance. In 622, he attacked Iran and in 623 he invaded Transcaucasia. His allies in this war were the Iberians, Egrisians and Abazgs. Heraclius turned for help to the Khazars as well. The Khazars'khaqan immediately started for Transcaucasia, hoping to take rich booty. The Khazars destroyed Derbent and invaded Albania. They headed for Tbilisi from there. The Armenian historian of those days writes, "A flood and an overflowing river flowed towards the country of the Georgians, it surrounded and besieged the petted trading, famous city of Tbilisi. Near Tbilisi the Khazars were met by Heraclius who had come from Lazica. After this, the allies attacked Tbilisi with a united force. The defenders of the city resisted the Khazars and Byzantines bravely. They threw boulders at them from special boulder-throwing machines. The defenders of the fortress rebuilt the cracked and destroyed walls and continued fighting. The besiegers dammed the Mtkvari and let the water flow towards the city, but still they were unable to break down the resistance of the defenders of Tbilisi, and had to lift the siege. Caesar Heraclius concluded an agreement with the Khazars, and he himself moved to the centre of Persia. There, at the city of Nineveh, in a decisive battle, he defeated the Persians. Meanwhile, there was a coup d'état out at the Shah's court in which Khosro II was killed and his son Kavad ascended the throne. The new Shah began negotiations with Byzantium at once, and in April 628, a peace treaty was concluded.





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By that time, Caesar Heraclius won a victory in Iran and the Khazars had taken Tbilisi after a two months' siege. The Khazars had utterly devastated the city, mercilessly slaughtering the defenders of the fortress and taking fabulous wealth. According to the chronicler, the Khazars brought boxes full of treasure and heaped them in front of their sovereign. There was such a pile of things decorated with gold and silver, coins, precious stones and pearls that even eyes were unable to look at them. The Khazars had captured even the Shah's vice-gerent and the Kartli *erismtavari* too. They brought the captives to their commander, who decided to punish them cruelly. They were first blinded, then hanged, skinned, stuffed with hay and hung from the city wall.

Caesar Heraclios carried out severe repressions against his enemies and those who had not adopted Christianity were massacred mercilessly. He did not spare Monophysite Christians either, and as the chronicler informs us "rivers of blood were flowing inside churches." According to the treaty, concluded between Iran and Byzantium, Kartli was divided into two parts as it was before under the treaty concluded in 591. Western Kartli fell to Byzantium, while Eastern Kartli remained under the control of Iran. The *erismtavari* was still at the head of Kartli., and the emperor assisted in strengthening his power. He did it because he wanted to have a powerful and loyal ally in the ruler of the bordering country. As for Western Georgia, things were different there. The local king's power was gradually annulled. The king of Lazica or Egrisi is not even mentioned at the end of the sixth century and the ruler of the country already bears the Byzantine title of a patrician.

At the end of the sixth century the Byzantines took from Egrisi the northwestern part of the country – which became part of the empire under the name of Abazgia (*Abkhazia* in Georgian). An *eristavi* was appointed as its ruler. Since that time, the Greek term *Abazgia* and its equivalent Georgian *Apkhazeti* denoted the northern part of the Black Sea coast of Western Georgia. It was inhabited by both Kartvelian (Megrel-Chan, Svan, etc.) and possibly not Kartvelian tribes, for instance, Apshiles, whom some researchers consider the tribe related to today's Abkhazs.

The term *Abazgia*, as it has been established by special research by Academician T. Gamrekelidze, is a Greek form for the Georgian *Apkhazeti*. It is derived from the name of one of the Western Georgian tribes- Abkhazi, which later on first denoted the above-mentioned *saeristavo*, and then became the name of all of Western Georgia. In foreign sources of the eleventh and twelfth centuries Georgia was called Abkhazia (*Apkhazeti*). Such an extension of the meaning of the toponym *Apkhazeti* is the result of certain historical processes. We will discuss them below.

Georgian Culture From the Fourth to the Seventh Centuries

Christian Georgia received a rich cultural inheritance from ancient times. Thus, the Georgian culture in the early feudal period was based on the traditions of the previous period. It was closely connected with the cultures of neighbouring countries and peoples – Byzantium, Iran and Armenia. This factor significantly enriched the Georgian



culture and assisted its development. On its part, the Georgian national culture had also its share in the cultural development of its neighboring countries.

After the Christian religion had been established in Georgia, it began an unrelenting struggle against pagan beliefs and customs. Consequently, many monuments of pre-Christian culture were smashed. It is supposed that many Georgian documents of the pagan period were destroyed as well. As for the written language, it acquired a special significance after the establishment of Christianity.

Christian religious rites needed a wide use of the written language. The Georgian alphabet became more refined in connection with it. According to the Greek language, each vowel sound obtained a letter sign. The sequence of letters in the alphabet also followed the Greek pattern, and each letter was given a numerical meaning.

The oldest form of the Georgian written language is presented by *uncials* or *mrglovani* written language.

In the fifth and the seventh centuries the *uncials* were used both on epigraphic monuments and in ancient books. The alphabet itself is so well formed and perfect that it makes us think that it had developed over several centuries. The letters, with their graphic outline by their archaic form, even resemble the Phoenician alphabet.

It is natural that a hypothesis should have arisen that the Georgian alphabet was created in the first millennium, B.C., but unfortunately not a single example of the Georgian written language (apart from separate letter-signs) of this ancient period has been discovered. The oldest inscription in the Georgian *uncials* that has been found to the present day is dated back to the 430s. It is an inscription made in mosaic preserved on the floor of a Georgian Monastery in Palestine.

The oldest inscription in Georgia is on the Bolnisi Cathedral, dating back to 473-494. Old inscriptions are also preserved on the stone stele from the sixth century of Tskise, on the Mtskheta Jvari (Cross) and other monuments as well. In recent years, a stone stele with an inscription in *uncials* was found at the village of Davadi in the Aragvi Gorge. It is made of the complete Georgian alphabet and is dated back to the sixth century with paleographic signs. The texts from the Bible preserved on palimpsests date back to the fifth and sixth centuries.

The oldest Christian books translated into Georgian are "the Gospel" and "Genesis", translated from Greek, Syrian and Armenian. In later centuries, these translations were made more precise and edited. They were also made complete. Works with hagiographic contents were also translated; original Georgian works were written as well.

The oldest Georgian hagiographic work is *The Martyrdom of Shushanik*, written by Iakob of Tsurtavi in the 470s. The book describes how the Kartli Pitiakhshi Varsken tortured his wife Shushanik because she did not satisfy Varsken's demand to adopt Mazdeism. She did not reject Christianity to the end and died as a martyr. This literary work is written in a rich language of a high artistic value. One can feel rich literary traditions of the previous period in it, which points to the fact that other older literary works had existed before *The Martyrdom of Shushanik* was written. This work is also valuable as a historic source to study Georgia's social conditions and life of those days. Another work of the same genre, dated back to the sixth century is *The Martyrdom of Evstathy of Mtskheta*. In this work, the situation in Kartli in the period of the Persian domination, during the rule of *marzpan*, is described.



Almost nothing has been preserved of the poetical and philosophical works of those times, though by indirect data, a certain picture about them is created. The Egrisians often made names for themselves by their eloquence at festive gatherings organized by the Greeks in the fourth century. Ancient Greek education, the knowledge of the ancient Greek poetry and philosophy, were very popular in Iberia and Colchis. There was a philosophical school near the city of Phasis in Colchis in the fourth century. Young people from other remote places of the Eastern Roman Empire were sent there to get a proper education. The famous rhetorician of those times Eugenius and his son Themistius, studied in the philosophical academy of Colchis. This is what Themistius wrote about it, "I have plucked the fruit of rhetoric . . . at the end of Pontus, near Phasis, where Argo who had come from Thessaly settled down . . . I did not go there of my own free will and decision; I was sent there by such a well-wisher as a father can be and a proper thinker as a philosopher may be . . . He himself also acquired his well-known philosophy there". The above-mentioned Egrisian rhetoricians, Ayet and Partadzi had also received their education there. Agathia, the sixth century Byzantine historian, recorded their brilliant oratorical speeches.

Petre Iberi (411-491) is a brilliant representative of the Georgian philosophic school. He belonged to the royal family of Kartli and had been brought up by a well-known Georgian philosopher Mithridates Lazi. In 423, the 12-year-old prince was taken as a hostage to the court of Emperor Theodosius II in Byzantium. There Queen Eudocia along with Mithridates Lazi looked after his studies. The Georgian prince, whose secular name was Murvanos, turned out to be very gifted and received a brilliant education. When he came of age, he left the luxurious life of the palace and went to live in Palestine together with his teacher. There he took vows, became a monk and called himself Petre Iberi. He had traveled in many countries, finally settling down in Mayumi, near the town of Gaza. He carried out active philosophical and ideological work. In 452, he was elected bishop. He had not lost touch with Georgia. Petre Iberi built Georgian monasteries in Jerusalem and in the desert around it. And established a school where the majority of students were Georgians living in Syria. The thirteen Syrian fathers who later returned to Georgia and carried out fruitful cultural Christian activities must have been some of those people.

Petre Iberi had splendid knowledge of antique philosophy which was rejected by the Christian theology. He took upon himself a hard task full of responsibility of treating ancient philosophy to bring it closer to the principles of Christianity. He solved this problem successfully. To make his philosophy more acceptable to the Christian circles he declared the first century philosopher, Dionysius Areopagite, to be the author of his treatises. This secret became known only recently. Two researchers came to this conclusion independently of each other. One was a Georgian philosopher Sh. Nutsubidze, and the other a Belgian scholar – Ernst Honigman.

The development of the Georgian Christian culture was greatly influenced by a fierce dogmatic struggle among various trends that had formed inside Christianity. We come across all these trends in Georgia, but when the political situation changed, their significance and influence also underwent a change. For instance, Byzantium always supported the orthodox dyophysite trend, especially after the church council held in Chalcedon in 451. This council considered the dyophysite faith to be the only true faith, i.e. it declared that Christ had two natures (human and divine). Contrary to this, Iran supported monophysite-Christians and placed them under its protection. Of course, all this had political reasons.



When Iran's political influence became stronger, as for instance, in the sixth century Kartli, monophysites occupied the dominant position, but as soon as Byzantium's influence became stronger, the monophysites were replaced by dyophysites. Finally, dyophysite Christianity won a victory in Kartli. As for Armenia, the Monophysite faith being stronger, it became the dominant religion there. Due to this, as we have mentioned, in 608 the Georgian and Armenian churches separated and the fruitful cultural and political relations between these two neighboring countries almost stopped. This struggle resulted in altering or destroying many works. This exerted a negative influence on the cultural life of both peoples.

Art has a special place in the Georgian culture of the early Christian period. Architecture and almost all the branches of fine arts are developed and reached the level of artistic maturity.

A comparatively small number of the secular architectural monuments of the fourth to the seventh centuries have survived. Archaeological excavations confirm the fact that many dwelling-places and fortification buildings were built in Georgia during that period. A number of new cities and towns were built in that time: Tbilisi, Ujarma, Cheremi, and Dmanisi. Construction was carried out in old towns and cities too: Mtskheta, Urnisi, Uplistsikhe, Rustavi, Tsikhe-Goji, Bichvinta (Pitsunda), etc. Only the ruins of these buildings have reached us, therefore it is difficult to imagine the diversity of the architectural works of those days. The monuments of church architecture are comparatively better preserved. If the first churches were small, they become monumental beginning with the fifth century. Palestinian "basilicas" were used as models for such churches. They were of a longish form, with gable roofs, domeless buildings, sometimes divided into "naves" by a row of columns. The Bolnisi Sion (478-493), Urnisi (sixth century) Tbilisi "Anchiskhati" (sixth century), the Katsareti Trinity (sixth century), Vazisubani (sixth century), etc. are remarkable among the basilica-type buildings. A specific type of a basilica was invented in Georgia – a three-church basilica in which the "naves" are separated by walls. These are the Lower Bolnisi, Nekresi and Dmanisi churches (fifth to the seventh centuries).

Beginning with the sixth century, domed churches gradually appear beside the basilicas. It is they that express the essence of the Georgian national architecture best of all. It reached its acme in the well-known buildings of the type of the cross (The Mtskheta Jvari, 586-605, the Ateni Sion, seventh century, Martvili, and Old Shuamta). Monuments of the type of the Mtskheta Jvari are found in Armenia too, but they differ from the Georgian monuments by the details of the plan and proportions, and also by the building material and working out the facades.

The development that followed the type of the cross is presented in the architecture of the Tsromi Church (seventh century), where the dome does not lean on the walls, as we have it in the buildings of the cross-type, it leans on the four columns, standing in the middle. The Ishkhani and Bana churches (seventh century.) in Southern Georgia are interesting with their architectural forms.

Easel painting and sculpture were unknown to Georgian art in the Middle Ages. Only a relief on stone, wood or metal was developed of the branches of sculpture. Church facades, separate architectural details, wooden doors, and also steles were decorated with reliefs on metal. We have splendid patterns of relief sculpture on the Mtskheta Jvari, on the tops of the columns of the Bolnisi Sion, and so on.



Almost nothing has been preserved of the wall painting in churches. Fragments of the wall and floor mosaic have been comparatively preserved, for instance, the fragments of the wall mosaic in Tsromi (seventh century), the floor mosaic of the Bichvinta church (fifth and sixth centuries) where an interesting composition is depicted with a "life fountain", various animals and birds, geometrical figures, etc. Researchers think that local specialists must have made the mosaic.

Arab Rule in Georgia

In the 640s, Arabs appeared on the frontiers of Georgia. They took advantage of the fact that Iran and Byzantium were weakened due to long wars against each other, defeated Iran and started for Transcaucasia.

The Arabs had a lower level of development compared to the conquered cultured peoples but they had numerous, well-organized and fanatically disposed military forces. They easily defeated their adversaries' armies which were sometimes better equipped and more experienced, but less disciplined.

A Meccan merchant named Muhammad united the Arab tribes at the beginning of the seventh century. He at the same time created a new religion – Islam. Islam was a monotheistic religion influenced by Judaism and Christianity. One of the duties of a follower of Islam was war (*jihad*, *hazavath*) to spread their faith. Islam became the ideology of the Arabs' aggressive wars. Its principles are given in their holy book, the *Koran*. According to these principles Moslem warriors, invading foreign countries, had the right to kill and take prisoner *giaours* (those who had a different faith), to enslave women and children, and seize their property. The *Koran* promised those who died in "wars for the faith" a place in Paradise. Such rights gave a powerful stimulus to Arab warriors for conquering various countries.

After Muhammad's death in 632 his activities were continued by his assistants — caliphs — who began to wage aggressive wars. In the reign of the second caliph, Omar (634-644), the Arabs conquered Syria, Palestine, and a great part of Iran. After this, the way to Transcaucasia was open for them. The first detachments of Arabs appeared in Armenia in 640 and occupied the capital of this country – Dvin. In 642 and 663, the Arabs reached Kartli too, but the Georgians defeated and drove them away. In the 650s, the Arabs gained a firmer foothold in Armenia. In 654 they inflicted a crushing defeat on the Byzantine commander, Mavrianus, who found refuge in Kartli. The Arabs followed the fleeing enemy and entered Kartli.

The *erismtavari* of Kartli, Stephanos II, sent his envoy to meet the Arabs with gifts and appealed for peace. The Kartli *erismtavari* seems to have understood the situation and preferred concluding a peaceful agreement with the Arabs' numerous and always victorious forces to waging war against them. The Arab commander appeared to be pleased with the action of the *erismtavari*, considered the gifts to be the future tribute and after conducting negotiations with the envoy, compiled the text of the peace treaty. It is the so called "protection deed" in which the rights and duties of both, the Georgians and Arabs, are enumerated. The Arabs promised the Georgians that they would not touch their families, property, churches and Christian sacred places on condition the Georgians



recognized "the humiliation by *jizia*" and would pay tribute (*jizia*), a dinar per family. At the same time, the Georgians were not allowed to join several households to decrease the *jizia*, and the Arabs did not have a right to divide the families artificially with the purpose of increasing the *jizia*. It was the Georgians' duty to help the Arabs in their fight against their enemies. Also, if any Arab happened to separate from his detachment, the Georgians were to render him any assistance and to take him to the nearest detachment of the "believers". Those Georgians who adopted Islam, prayed and gave out *zachath* (Moslem's charity tax), would be declared Moslems' brothers and those who would reject Islam, peace and *jizia* would be considered Allah's enemies.

The Georgian envoy, together with a representative of the Arabs and with this agreement, went back, and took Habib-Ibn-Maslama's letter to the inhabitants of Tbilisi in which he promised them peace if they fulfilled the terms of the peace treaty. The same kind of agreements were concluded with separate communities of Kartli and with the half-independent feudal lords' estates that had been established in Georgia after the abolition of the king's rule there and had obtained quite important rights in solving both foreign and internal affairs.

At the beginning, the rule of Arabs in Georgia was not stable. Soon disturbances and a civil war broke out in the caliphate. The Georgians, Armenians and Albanians betrayed the Arabs and stopped paying tribute. The Kartli *erismtavari* Nerses defeated and drove away Baraba, the Arabs' commander stationed in Armenia. Then Byzantium demanded obedience and being paid tribute. Emperor Justinian II (685-694) sent his commander Leontius there, and then he himself also took part in the war. He raided these countries and made them pay heavy tribute. The situation of Kartli was complicated by the fact that its neighbors to the north were Khazars, who took advantage of the situation in Kartli, raiding and plundering it. The Arabs had a permanent warfare with the Khazars and therefore Georgia and Albania presented the most important strategic bridgehead. The Arabs tried to occupy the Derbent and Dariali passes; therefore they permanently sent their armies in that direction.

At the end of the seventh century, the Arabs appeared in Western Georgia as well. In 697, the local ruler (Patricios) Serghi Barnukisdze invited them. However, at that time the Arabs were unable to establish themselves firmly in Western Georgia, as well as in the whole of Transcaucasia. Insurrections against the Arabs did not stop in Transcaucasia.

Chaliph Abd-al-Malich (685-705) sent his brother Muhammad ibn Marvan to subdue the insurgency in Transcaucasia. The latter was appointed ruler of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Al-Jazira (Mesopotamia). He devastated the whole Armenia, Eastern Georgia and Albania, plundered and burnt churches and monasteries, dwelling-places, imprisoned and massacred the population. After this war, the Arabs established a province *Arminia*, including Armenia, Georgia, and Albania. The Arab emir's seat was in the city of Dvin, and he controlled this domain from there.

In 716 and 717 the ruler of Arminia, Muhammad ibn-Marvan, invaded Western Georgia. He occupied and destroyed the capital of Egrisi, Tsikhe-Goji — surrounded by triple ramparts — then passed through the wall of Klissuri, destroyed the city of Tskhumi (Sukhumi) and reached the fortress of Anacopia. Mihr and Archil, the sons of *erismtavari* Stephanos III, driven away from Kartli, were fortified there with numerous warriors and with their families. Mihr and Archil were descendants of Kartli's old royal family — the



Khosroian – Parnavazians. Kartli *erismtavaris* and the Abkhazian *eristavi* Leon informed the Emperor of Byzantium about the situation created in Western Georgia by the invasion of the Arabs and asked for help. At this time, Leon III of Isavria (717-790) had just ascended the emperor's throne in Byzantium. He himself was greatly oppressed by the Arabs. At this very time, the Arabs besieged Constantinople. Thus, Emperor Leon was well aware of what significance the Georgians' fight against the Arabs had, and if up to now Byzantium's emperors did not allow the Kartli *erismtavaris* to take the title of Georgian kings, this time he, according to the Georgian chronicler, recognized "their being kings" himself and even sent king's crowns to Mihr and Archil. At the same time Leon of Isavria bestowed the title of Abkhazia's *eristavi* upon Leon I, which his descendants would inherit, and ordered him to be a vassal of Kartli kings.

According to the same chronicler, the Georgians and Abkhazians inflicted a crushing defeat on the Arabs near Anacopia. Finally, the invaders were compelled to leave Western Georgia. In the battle against the Arabs Mihr was wounded and later died of this wound. Archil executed Mihr's will and married his daughters to *eristavis* and gave them their own territories as a dowry. By this act, the *eristavis* achieved their centuries-long aim. These territories became their own property, which no one had the right to claim. Archil invited Leon, *eristavi* of Abkhazia, and married him to Mihr's daughter Gurandukht. Leon admitted that he was Archil's vassal, swore there would be no enmity between them and he would be Archil's obedient subject. After this, Archil went to Egrisi. According to Mihr's will, Egrisi, as well as Svaneti, Takveri, Argveti and Guria were his domains (*saukhutseso*). He managed the affairs there, rebuilt the destroyed citadels, put the city life in order, and after quite a long period of time returned to Eastern Georgia.

Meanwhile Eastern Georgia had experienced great disaster. First, it had been raided by the Khazars and made to pay heavy tribute, but in 723 Caliph Yazid II (720-724) appointed Al-Jarah ibn Allah al Hakim ruler of Arminia and ordered him to fight against the Khazars. Al-Jarah entered Transcaucasia with a large army. The Khazars left Eastern Transcaucasia without fighting. The Arabs moved to the Northern Caucasus too and defeated the Khazars several times. In 729, Jarah came to Kartli a second time. While he was in Tbilisi, the inhabitants of the city showed him Ibn Maslama's "Protection Deed" and demanded its renewal. Jarah found it valid, but added some amendments to it. He increased the amount of the *jizia* (poll-tax) and added a land tax — *haradj* — to it. Al-Jarah went to the Northern Caucasus from Tbilisi, defeated the Khazars and returned with rich booty. The Khazars retaliated the next year and destroyed Al-Jarah's army. The Arab commander himself died in this battle.

Caliph Hisham (724-743) sent a large army headed by Muhammad Ibn Marvan against the Khazars. At the same time, he began to prepare for a new attack on Constantinople. He gathered a great quantity of ships in the Mediterranean Sea, but this "great armada" of the Arabs was completely destroyed at the approaches to Constantinople by a storm in 732. That year the Arabs were also defeated in Europe. The king of the Franks, Charles Martel, destroyed the Arab army that had come from Spain at the town of Poitiers in France on October 4, 732, thus preventing their advance into Europe. After this, the Arabs turned their main forces against the Khazars who were natural allies of Byzantium. However, before they achieved their aim, it was necessary to subjugate Transcaucasia. This was the objective that Caliph Hisham's cousin Marvan Ibn Muhammad had. He



invaded Transcaucasia with the army of 120,000 men and massacred the local rebellious population in 735.

Georgian chroniclers describe the ruthlessness and cruelty of this Arab commander. The people called him *Qru* (deaf) for this. It seems that in later chronicles Muhammad Ibn Marvan's, Marvan ibn Muhammad's, other commanders' invasions were united, and all of them are ascribed to Murvan Qru.

Murvan Qru, first of all, conquered the Derbent and Dariali passes, seized Georgia's towns and fortresses and razed them to the ground, massacred and captured the majority of the population. His bloody raids lasted over two years. Finally, in 737, the Arabs' army started for the country of the Khazars from both the Dariali and Derbent passes. Murvan himself followed the Dariali road. It was the Arabs' last successful warfare beyond the Caucasian mountains. The Khazars were beaten and had to yield to the Arabs and even embrace Islam.

Shortly after this war, in 740, Emperor Leon of Isavria inflicted a crushing defeat on the Arabs. This was the turning point in the relations of the Arabs and Byzantium. The Arabs retreat and Byzantium gradually returns the lost territories in Asia Minor and Syria. The Arabs retreated from the country of the Khazars too, and the latter, renouncing Islam, restored their relations with Byzantium.

Murvan Qru's invasions over, peace began to reign in Georgia for some time and the country was able to heal its wounds. At this time, Archil returned to Eastern Georgia, and began great construction works on the territory of Kakhet-Hereti, which was his domain by inheritance. He did his best to strengthen the Christian faith and put feudal relations in order. For instance, the first thing he did after his return to Kakheti was to give the members of his military detachment the titles of the *aznauri* i.e. he gave his faithful warriors lands and the peasants living on them and requested that they do military service in return. Archil tried to strengthen peace with the Arabs. With this purpose, he visited the Arab commander and asked him for the inviolability of Christianity. The commander of the Arabs imprisoned him and requested that he embrace Islam. Archil refused point-blank to do it and was executed. The Georgian church declared him a saint.

A new dynasty of the Abbassides came to rule in the caliphate in 750. From this time, the tribute paid to the Arabs became larger. This made the situation of the population unbearable. Wrath and hatred for the foreign conquerors grew day by day. There were incessant insurrections and bloody battles.

The most active fighters against the Arabs are the mountain people of Eastern Georgia. The Georgian sources call them the Tsanars (the Arabs call them Sanaria). The Arab commander Hassan Ibn Kahtaba, sent to subdue them, was unable to do it. The caliph sent reinforcements, headed by four commanders. According to the Arab author Al - Yakub, the Tsanars united with the Kakhetians and fought against the Arabs' armies. Ten thousand Georgian warriors were killed in that battle. The Arab commander managed to suppress this insurrection with great difficulty.

At the beginning of the 770s, Hassan Ibn Kahtaba appointed his son Ibrahim ruler or emir of Kartli. It was a new ruler of the Arabs whose seat was in Tbilisi, ruling the country from there. The Arabs stationed garrisons in Tbilisi, Rustavi and Dmanisi. The authority of the *erismtavari* still remained in Kartli, but it was subordinated to the Tbilisi emir.



In 772-773, Caliph Al Mansur (754-775) summoned the Kartli *ersimtavari* Nerse to Baghdad and kept him there for three years as a prisoner because the Georgians rebelled against Arabs and emir was appointed in Tbilisi.

The movement against the Arabs had its own preachers in Kartli. The eighth century writer Ioane Sabanisdze described a very noteworthy fact: Abo, a young Arab man and a servant of the Kartli *ersimtavari*, renounced Islam and embraced Christianity. He was tortured by the Arabs for it. Sabanisdze used the martyrdom of Abo to inspire a feeling of national pride in his fellow citizens, saying, "Look, what our faith and country are like! Even the son of our conquerors takes our side and sacrifices his life for his new country". The Christian Church declared Abo a saint. The Argveti princes David and Constantine, killed in the battle against the Arabs, and *ersimtavari* Archil were declared saints as well. Their example kindled the desire to fight against the conquerors in the Georgian population. Ioane Sabanisdze and preachers like him raised the consciousness of Georgians and strengthened their desire to fight for their country.

Economic and Social Development in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries

In the eighth and ninth centuries, the immense Arab empire that spread from Central Asia to the Pyrenean Peninsula began disintegrating. It was a natural process because the caliphate had united the countries and peoples with different levels of development, different cultures and different religions by force. The Arabs themselves were also greatly influenced by the conquered peoples. This influence was noticed both in the political and social development and in culture. The universally known "Arabian culture" is actually the synthesis of the cultures of conquered peoples having great cultural traditions – Iranians, Syrians, Greeks, Caucasians and others. Feudal relations began to develop among the Arabs too, but this process was very painful and encountered many obstacles.

It is obvious that Arab rule in Georgia hindered the normal development of feudal relations, but it was unable to stop it. The country, in spite of it, made progress in social and economic development. The Arabs' rule was especially heavy in the central regions of Kartli where feudal relations had already reached a rather high level. The population left those territories en masse because of very hard conditions. They moved to the peripheries of the country and introduced the rules of more developed feudal relations, the united Christian ideology, the Georgian consciousness, unity and the Georgian literary language.

The weakening of the Arabs' rule assisted the progress of economy, the development of agriculture and the city life. In the ninth and tenth centuries, economic progress spread across the whole of the Near East. Economic development of some countries followed the disintegration of the Arab state, with Georgia taking an active part in this process.

From the second half of the eighth century intensive repopulation and rebuilding of devastated and vacant sites, the building of new settlements, felling trees, and the growth of agricultural areas began. All this was connected with improved agricultural tools aside from better external conditions. An improved plough was widely used, to which eight to



ten pairs of oxen could be harnessed. Such a large Georgian plough made it easier to work on a virgin soil. It was also possible to plough the soil deeper, which assisted the growth of the grain crop in the rather dry climate of Eastern Georgia. Various ploughing tools were used in different natural conditions and soils (*erkvani*, *achacha*, *kavi*). Alongside the grain-growing, viticulture was also developed. A vineyard was an inevitable element of a Georgian's economy. The fact pointing to the intensive development of viticulture and its significance is that from the ninth century vine-leaves and clusters of grapes begin to appear more often in Georgian painting and the relief sculpture on the walls. Horticulture also played an important part in the economy.

Cattle breeding was also developed in Georgia from the time immemorial. In this period, this branch of economy was at the height of its development. The local Georgian species of horses, cows, sheep, and goats were famous in the whole of the Middle East. Apiculture and flax processing was also developed in Georgia. Honey, wax and flax products were extensively exported abroad.

Georgia's economy was based on developed agriculture whose foundation was land. Thus, the forms of land ownership were very important. At this time, the majority of those who worked on the land were peasants. A peasant was a worker who had lost freedom and lived on a feudal lord's land. He was given a piece of land, called *sakomlo* or *pudze*. It was of a certain amount and consisted of a piece of land, intended for a cornfield, a vineyard, an orchard and a vegetable garden, and also for a house and a barn (a house and a yard, a threshing floor, etc.). Each *pudze* was taxed. The peasant was to pay taxes to his master. It meant labor duties and natural-money taxes.

Besides such individual ownership of peasants, in some places common to the whole village community land ownership was also preserved, mainly of arable lands, woods and pastures. However, the owner of this land was some feudal lord all the same. A number of people working on the land were the population from a low stratum (*erisganni*). They were petty landowners who retained social freedom. They paid taxes to the state and did military service.

The feudal lords owning land were the king's (prince's) family, the *aznauris* (the nobility) and the church. Feudal land ownership had a complicated hierarchical structure. The king and great princes owned the greatest amount of lands. The greatest part of their property was given to their subordinates — the *aznauris* — of various ranks. The giving of lands (of course, with the peasants living on them) was considered "a favor". The favored one had some obligations to fulfil towards the one who had granted him this favor. This estate could be passed from father to son that is why it was called *mamuli* (patrimony). It reminds us of the European *feod*, i.e. the main, typical form of feudal land ownership.

A significant part of the family estates of the kings or princes was given to churches and monasteries as "donated" lands. The rest of the lands remained their own property.

The highest stratum of the *aznauris* were great or *didebuli aznauris*. Their estates consisted both of the land given them as a favor and the royal territory that they were to rule, and also their own patrimony (bought, received as a dowry, obtained in wars). The royal territory that they were to rule — *saeristavo* (the territory around a fortress) and other estates were considered by them to be ancestral or their own.

In the course of the two past centuries (the sixth and seventh centuries) the *didaznaurebi* strengthened their ownership of the former royal territories (*saeristavo*





and others) even more. Under the conditions of the domination of Iran and Byzantium the *eristavis* managed to get formal recognition by both parties that those territories were their ancestral property. As a chronicler remarked, "the Kartli *eristavis* had deeds of kings of Persia and Byzantium, stating that the *saeristavos* were their ancestral property".

Thus, the *eristavis* turned into princes, owners of principalities. That was the reason that the Arab commander Habib Ibn Maslama signed the protection deeds not only with the *erismtavari*, but also with separate princes. And there were quite a few of these according to an Arab source.

At first, the Arabs did not interfere in the internal affairs of the country and its government. This fact created favorable conditions for the further feudal development of Kartli. It is known that in the conditions of feudalism, when there is no centralized rule, the so-called "law of the jungle" dominates, or the principle that the one who has power is always right. There is a permanent fight between the principalities inside the country to take possession of the territories and peasants belonging to others, to subjugate the low stratum of the population, the *mdabioris*. Their contemporary Georgian chronicler points to these events, "many princes appeared in the state of Kartli, they became enemies and started fighting against one another". It is noteworthy that it was in this very period that feudal fortresses were intensively being built in Georgia. The increase of the number of fortresses shows the supremacy of their owners over the population of those territories on the one hand, and on the other – fighting against one another to take possession of estates and peasants. In this situation, the less powerful prince was forced to be protected by a more powerful one. The more powerful prince subordinated a less powerful one to himself and the relations of a master and his vassal were established between them. Very often such relations were established voluntarily. The less powerful and defenseless feudal lord found a powerful protector and became his subordinate of his own free will. The small principality became part of the bigger one. The "small" prince with his palace, fortress and seized or appropriated lands, towns and villages was protected by a more powerful "great prince". These small princes were the retinue of the great prince. A social-political organization was being established whose function was to get the better of both – the *mdabioris* and peasantry in the class struggle, and the predatory intentions of the neighboring princes. Thus, the system of a master and his subordinate was gradually established that was analogous to the West European system of a suzerain and vassal.

Thus, by the eighth century the following hierarchical system becomes dominant: a great majority of the *aznauris* became a subordinate of a former *eristavi* or another *aznauri* who became an *eristavi*. The latter, on their part, are looking for a more powerful prince's protection. Such princes on their part also seek the protection of a more powerful prince or a king. These princes still have the title of the *eristavi* or another high official (e.g. of a *pitiakshi*) by tradition. At the same period, a title that is higher than the *eristavi* was introduced. It is *eristavi-eristavi* (head of the *eristavis*) and the institute of 'the lord of the *eristavi-eristavis*'. For instance, the Ateni Sion inscription dating back to the eighth century reads "Mamphal (the title of the Artanuji and Klarjeti prince) Stephanoz, by God's will the lord of the Georgian and Megrel *eristavi-eristavis*". Here the whole hierarchy of the relations between masters and their subordinates is seen. *Eristavi-eristavis* are Mamphal Stephanoz's subordinates. He has such subordinates not only in Kartli, but in Western Georgia as well. It means that *eristavi-eristavis*' subordinates are





separate *eristavis* (turned to princes), the latter must also have smaller *aznauris* as their subordinates. These are *tsinashemdgomelni* and *sakutarni* (petty nobility), they were followed by *tadzeulni* (warriors) and *msakhurni* (servants), personally free *mdabioris*, former *erisganis* who had partially retained their social freedom and who did military or some other service for their masters.

The relations that were like those of fathers and children or of masters and serfs suited the principles of Christianity too: children should obey fathers and fathers should protect children.

Such interrelations between small and large principalities were also shaped by the fact that it was necessary to unite their forces in the fight against the Arabs. Consequently, at the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century comparatively large political units — Georgian principalities — were formed one after another.

Formation of Georgian Feudal Kingdoms and Principalities

The Kakheti Principality

It was especially difficult for the Arabs to fight against the Tsanars on the peripheries of Georgia. The Tsanars were still at the stage of the patriarchal community system, but they united against the Arab conquerors and fought together against the enemy. Arab cavalry found it difficult to fight on wooded mountain slopes and in narrow gorges. The proud mountain people, accustomed to these conditions, fought bravely against the conquerors and destroyed them. The population of the plains, oppressed by the domination of the Arabs, also found shelter in the places comparatively protected from the enemy. The feudal lords of the neighboring countries aspired to have connections with the Tsanars. The latter had close economic relations with the neighboring regions in the plains. Stock raising was mainly developed in the mountains, and stock raising, especially sheep-breeding, needed winter pastures in the plains. The mountain population also needed the foodstuffs (bread, wine) produced in the plains, and it was necessary for them to sell the produce of stock raising. Consequently, a foundation was laid for the formation of one political unit from these regions.

The Tsanars had a specific form of government suitable for their system. They were ruled by an elected leader, the so called *Khevisberi* (the elder of the gorge) who had both secular and clerical power. This form of government remained unchanged in the mountain population of this region for a long time. The *khevisberi* was elected by several communities: *Khevis* (mountain regions). He was the highest authority and with community elders conducted the secular and clerical governments as well as arranged and conducted religious festivals. After embracing Christianity (Christianity in the mountains was greatly influenced by the local traditions and the pagan religion), this rule obtained a specific form. It was given the name of a Christian arch-priest-bishop's assistant. The above-mentioned power was of a theocratic character and it united the highest secular and ecclesiastical rule. This principality also united the following neighboring lowland regions:



Kakheti – Kakheti-Gardabani whose princes eagerly supported the archpriests of the Tsanars who fought against the Arabs so successfully and were protected by them. Thus, the archpriest became a great prince, and the other princes became his vassals.

The first great prince who seems to have been an independent ruler from the 780s was Grigol (787-827). His principality was already separated from the Kartli *saerismtavro* as a separate unit. After Grigol had died, there was a change of dynasty and the Gardabani princes seized power. The main province of this principality was Kakheti; therefore it was generally called Kakheti. Its centre was in the city of Tianeti. Later on Kakheti archpriests built a grand palace there — Bodoji — which was destroyed in the eleventh century. The Kakheti principality took an active part in the battles for the united Georgia.

Hereti Principality

The Hereti principality was established to the east of Kakheti, mainly in the middle and the lower end of the Iori and Alazani basin. While the Kartli kingdom existed, Hereti was a separate *saeristavo* and a great part of its territory was a royal domain. After the institution of kings had been abolished the descendants of the royal family settled down there as the *eristavis* of this region. The Byzantine Caesar appointed one of them, Nerse, son of Bakur, *erismtavari* of Kartli in the seventh century. His direct descendants were Mihr and Archil in the eighth century. As has been mentioned above, in the last years of his being *erismtavari* Archil was very active. He built churches, citadels, a fortified city Nukhpati, appointed *eristavis* and princes, had the non-Christian population chrstened by force, etc.

Hereti became a separate principality after Archil's descendants Ioane and Juansher had died. The representatives of one of the branches of the Bagrationi family who had settled down there became princes of Hereti. Sapl, son of Sumbat, is distinguished among them. He waged war against the Myhranids, the rulers of Albania, situated on the right bank of the Mtkvari, defeated and massacred them and conquered their domain. After this Sapl, the son of Sumbat, was called "Aran-shah". In the last quarter of the ninth century Grigol Hamam was the prince of Hereti.

His power became so strong that the title of the Hereti king was conferred on him. Thus at the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century the Hereti principality was established which was called a kingdom at the end of the ninth century. It was a rival of the neighboring Kakheti. Tense relations with Kakheti conditioned the relations of the Hereti king and princes with the Arabs. Contrary to Kakheti, they tried to have peaceful relations with the Arabs, and in this respect they had certain success.

The Egrisi-Abkhazia kingdom

A new Georgian kingdom on the territory of Western Georgia was established under different conditions. Having been liberated from the Arab domination, the population began to increase swiftly. A great number of emigrants from Eastern Georgia moved en masse towards Western Georgia. It was natural that this process should have



caused the cultural and ethnic closeness and merging of the populations of Eastern and Western Georgia. The Georgian literary language spread widely in Western Georgia. It was used for all clerical work and in church services. The influence and authority of the Mtskheta Catholicos was steadily increasing. Feudal relations developed swiftly and suitable institutions began to appear. The local *eristavis*, as in Eastern Georgia, were already feudal princes and the relations of a suzerain and vassal were being established.

When the domination of the Byzantines in Western Georgia gradually became weaker, the emperor's court only tried to divide the country with the help of the newly born princes and to retain its domination in this way. It has been mentioned above that the rulers of Byzantium separated Abazgia from the Egrisi kingdom and subordinated it to their empire. It happened in the sixth century. Misimianeti (Svaneti), Sanigeti (Chaniketi), Apshileti and other small political units also seceded from Egrisi and formed petty feudal principalities. The economic progress of the country and the development of feudal relations made it necessary to unite the country and form a larger political unit based on suzerain vassal relations. The foreign political situation also demanded it. Forming a united national state was necessary for both stopping the Arabs' new invasions and getting rid of Byzantium's domination.

After the institution of kings had been abolished in Western Georgia the former *Saeristavo* of Abazgia became the most advanced among the other principalities. It is called Abkhazeti (Abkhazia) in Georgian sources. The reason for its progress was the fact that this principality had suffered less from invasions. At the same time, the Byzantine Empire had also assisted its becoming more powerful. The *eristavis* and princes of Abazgia took advantage of the favorable situation and subordinated their neighboring weaker principalities and made them their vassals. For instance, they subordinated Sanigeti, situated to the northwest on this basis and a great part of Apshileti and Misimianeti, situated to the south of them. The princes of Abazgia (Abkhazia) acted shrewdly and prudently. They had good relations with both Byzantium and the Kartli *erismrtavari*, fighting against the Arabs. They did not put obstacles on the way of emigrants coming from Kartli. On the contrary, they willingly received them as warriors in their service and gave them the title of the *aznauri* in their principality. Mihr and Archil were accompanied by a thousand of such warriors who had come to this territory with their families. Their settling down in Western Georgia and in Abkhazia assisted the spread and establishment of more developed Georgian feudal relations and culture as well as the Georgian language and Georgian Christian traditions. The more so, as this was closer and more acceptable for the local population than the Greek-Byzantine was, which had been imposed upon them by force. It is natural that after this the Georgian language should have become the language of personal relations, Christian religious rites, clerical work and culture for the ethnic groups inhabiting this territory and speaking different dialects and languages. This process assisted the further consolidation of the Kartvelian and non-Kartvelian ethnic groups living there and their formation into a united Georgian nation.

Leon, appointed by Leon III for fighting against Arabs, was especially active in strengthening and enlarging the principality of Abkhazia. He made the princes of Western Georgia (the former Egrisi Kingdom) his vassals and extended his territory from Nicopsia (today's Tuapse) in the north, to the river Chorokhi in the south, to the Likhi Range in the east. Having taken advantage of the weakening of Byzantium in the eighth century that





had been caused by internal religious struggles and disturbances, he made the Khazars' Khaqan — whose daughter's son he was — help him and liberated Egrisi-Abkhazia from the domination of Byzantium. As Archil and his sons who, according to the Georgian chronicler's information, had received the king's title and insignia from the Emperor of Byzantium, had left no heirs, Leon proclaimed himself king and was called "the king of Abkhazs". He made Kutaisi his capital city.

The term *Abkhazeti* (Abkhazia) did not mean then what it means today. The Abkhazs of today call themselves *Apsua*, and the country — *Apsni*. In old Georgian, they were called *Apsars* and *Abkhazeti* was the Georgian name of the part of Western Georgia situated between the northern Black sea coast and the Caucasian Range, to the west of the river Galidzga. There, apart from the ancestors of the Apsars (who are called Abkhazians today) Western Georgian tribes — the Abazgs. i.e. Abkhazs, Sanigs, i.e. Chans, Misimians or Svans and other, today extinct Georgian ethnic groups — lived. As we have seen, their unification took place first in the principality of Abkhazia (Greek Abazgia), and later the whole Western Georgia turned into one state under the hegemony of this principality. This state was ruled by the former *eristavis* or princes of Abkhazia and their descendants, which was the reason this West Georgian state was called the state of Abkhazia (Aphkazeti). The Armenian historians traditionally called this kingdom-Egrisi. Thus, the "Abkhazian kingdom" established at the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century is a Western Georgian kingdom. The majority of its population were Georgians (Karts, Egres, Svans, etc.) Its capital — Kutaisi was the oldest center of the Georgian culture. The state and the cultural-literary language of the Abkhazian kingdom was Georgian, and later on, the language of the church was also Georgian. By vigorous endeavors of Georgian kings the church of Abkhazia, i.e. of Western Georgia which had been part of the Constantinople patriarchy till the ninth century, left it and was subordinated to the Catholicos of Mtskheta. After this, the language of the divine service in the churches of the Abkhazian kingdom was only Georgian. The Abkhazian kings annulled the Greek bishoprics of Poti, Gudaqva, etc. Instead of those, they established new Georgian bishoprics: Chqondidi, Mokvi, Bedia. These bishoprics were centers of Georgian culture.

Having liberated themselves from the subjugation of Byzantium, the kings of Abkhazia conducted the general Georgian policy and took an active part in the struggle, aiming at the formation of a united state.

The Tao-Klarjeti Principality (the Domain of the Georgian Kuropalates)

As has been mentioned the central districts of Kartli suffered most from the oppression of the Arab rule, and even there their domination was coming to an end. The end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century, the period when Harun al-Rashid was caliph (786-809) is still the time of the external splendor of the Arab caliphate, but at this time the first signs of the approaching political crisis begin to appear. It was mostly noticeable in Transcaucasia. It is proved by the fact that the rulers appointed by the caliphate were changed very often. For instance, 17 rulers were changed in the Caucasus in the 23 years of Harun al-Rashid's reign because of incessant insurrections.



The Arab rulers took brutal measures of repression. According to the information of the Arab historian Iakub, Huzaima ibn-Hazim, appointed ruler of the Caucasus, summoned Kartli patricians and princes, slaughtered them with a sword and generally behaved so cruelly that he again stirred up an insurrection in Jurzan (Kartli) and Sanaria (Kakheti). The insurrections in Kartli went on and they were organized by Ashot I Bagrationi.

The famous family of the Bagrationis was from the ancient Georgian province Speri (the river Chorokhi Gorge, today's Ispir in Turkey) by origin. The Bagrationis became very influential in the sixth to the eighth centuries by pursuing a very energetic, shrewd and flexible policy. One of their branches took a high position in Armenia, the other in Kartli. In both countries, the Bagrationis became princes and kings. In Georgia, they retained the royal power until the beginning of the nineteenth century. As it has been mentioned, the first *erismtavari* Guaram belonged to the Bagrationi House. Hereti *eristavis* were the representatives of the side branch of their family. They became independent princes later and took the title of a king too. The title of "the kings of Georgia" had been conferred on the Bagrationis, settled in Tao-Klarjeti, earlier (Adamase, 888).

According to the official version, presented in the work of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus himself (tenth century), the Bagrationis are the family of divine origin, being descendants of David the Prophet, and related to Mary, Mother of God. The Georgian kings called themselves "lesian, Davidian, Solomonian Bagrationis".

Ashot I Bagrationi was the ruler of Kartli at the end of the eighth century and the beginning of the ninth century. At first, he had been very successful and had spread his power to Bardavi, but he was defeated by the Arabs and was forced to move to Southwestern Georgia, Shavsheti and Klarjeti, with his family and retinue. This territory bordered Byzantium and the Byzantines officially claimed to be the owners of the land. The Byzantine authorities took Ashot, an implacable fighter against the Arabs, under their protection, assisted him in every way, and conferred the highest court honor — that of the *Kuropolate* — on him. Ashot took advantage of this situation and established his principality. A great part of that territory was devastated due to Arab invasions and the population was significantly reduced. Ashot began to take possession of those lands in various ways. He bought some villages, built others, occupied some by force, subjected a great part of the local feudal lords — princes and *aznars* — and made them his vassals. In this way, Ashot set up a vast domain. It included old Georgian provinces: Shavsheti, Klarjeti, Tao, Nigali, Ajara, Speri, Samtskhe, Javakheti and Artahani. He made Artanuji, a stronghold built in Vakhtang Gorgasali's time, his residence. It was situated on a high rock and at that time had been destroyed by the Arabs. Ashot rebuilt the fortress and began building a town at its foot. He built St. Peter and Paul's cathedral at the upper part of the fortress and made it his burial ground and the church of his court. The newly built city of Artanuji was situated at the crossroads of significant trade routes, which is why it soon developed and became the most important city in Southern Georgia.

Ashot continued fighting against the Arabs and tried to conquer Kartli again. While preparing for one of the battles, when he was gathering warriors, he was treacherously attacked and assassinated in 830. The Arabs took advantage of this fact and occupied Kartli once more. Ashot left three sons, who were all underage. His heirs managed to restore the strength of their principality after quite a long time.



The Tbilisi Emirate

After the rebellion of Ashot Bagrationi and his leaving Kartli, the Arabs did not appoint anyone Kartli's *erismtavari*. The Tbilisi emir undertook ruling over Kartli himself. His rule, as has already been mentioned, was established in the 770s. He ruled over Kartli with the assistance of the *erismtavari*. The Tbilisi emir was usually appointed by the caliph himself, and he was subordinated to the ruler of Transcaucasia, "the vali of Arminia". His main task was to collect tribute for the caliph and to guarantee the rule and power of the Arabs in Kartli.

The all-Georgian anti-Arab liberation movement, the formation of new independent Georgian kingdoms and principalities, the process of disintegration, begun in the Arabs' caliphate, utterly changed the attitude of Tbilisi emirs towards the center of the caliphate. They also began to betray the center. They did not send the taxes they collected to the center, appropriating them for themselves. They were aided in their betrayal by the Georgian kings and princes.

Tbilisi Emirate factually became an ordinary Georgian principality. The only difference was that an Arab emir stood at its head with his Arab officials. The territory of Tbilisi Emirate was quite reduced. It did not include the whole Kartli and embraced mainly Tbilisi and its environs and Lower Kartli. A great majority of the population of this territory were Georgians. The social system and the forms of the landownership had the structure characteristic of the Georgian feudalism. The suzerain of the small princes of those principalities was the Tbilisi Emir. The Arab caliphs could not bear the idea of losing Kartli, this strategically and economically important region, and sent punitive troops there.

Ishak ibn Ismail ibn Shuabi was the Tbilisi Emir who distinguished himself by his insubordination. The Georgian sources call him Emir Sahak. His defiance lasted for fifteen years. He was supported by Kakhétians. The Arabs sent punitive forces against him several times, but they were defeated. Finally, Caliph Mutavachil (847-861) collected a great number of troops and put the famous commander Bugha Turk in command of them. The latter had distinguished himself in Azerbaijan in the fight against the rebellious Babeck. Bugha Turk reached Tbilisi in August 853. According to Arab authors, Tbilisi was a well-developed town. It had a wall around it with five gates. The town was divided into two parts by the river Mtkvari with a bridge across it. In sailing mills, built on the Mtkvari, wheat and other grains were ground. Bathhouses of naturally hot sulphur springs still existed, trade was at its height, and the population seems to have been numerous. The buildings were mostly wooden.

The defenders of the city put up a fierce resistance to Bugha Turk, which was why he carried out drastic measures. He ordered his troops to shoot burning arrows at the town, setting fire to it, which the wind helped to spread. After this, the Arab commander was able to take it. Fifty thousand people were killed in Tbilisi and Emir Sahak was captured and put to death.

In spite of such repressions, the Tbilisi emirs factually did not obey the caliphs from the end of the ninth century. The expression of external obedience was only one thing; they minted coins in the name of caliphs for a certain time.



Struggle of Kingdoms and Principalities for Dominance in Georgia

As soon as Georgian kingdoms and principalities were formed in Georgia struggle for priority began among them. It is natural that it should have been important for them to have a dominant role in Kartli. Kartli was the historical center of Georgia. After the institute of *erismtavari* had been abolished, no local Georgian government existed there. As we have seen the Tbilisi emir was able to exercise his power only in Tbilisi and Lower Kartli. Therefore, to take possession of the rest of Kartli became the main objective of the rulers of kingdoms and principalities. The same kind of kingdoms and principalities were also formed in Armenia. The Armenian kings or princes start to interfere in the struggle among Georgian kings and princes actively. The reason for it was that the politicians of those times made it their aim to make the whole Caucasus a united feudal state. Both the political and social economic interests of the cultured peoples of the Caucasus demanded this.

The first to begin the fight to conquer Kartli was the Kakheti prince Grigol. He occupied Ksani Gorge and the rest of the territory situated west of it. Ashot Kuropalates did not like this. He, as the former *erismtavari*, considered himself to have the legal right over Kartli. He asked for assistance Theodosius, King of Abkhazia, son of Leon II; as for Grigol, the Tbilisi Emir supported him. Ashot Kuropalates defeated the Prince of Kakheti and occupied the Inner Kartli, but was obliged to retreat soon. As we have mentioned above Arabs invaded Kartli in 826 and Ashot was assassinated. The Arabs not only took Kartli away from Ashot's young children, but they exacted tribute from their own domain Shavshet-Klarjeti. When Ashot's heirs grew up, the Emperor of Byzantium conferred the title of Kuropalates on Bagrat, the middle brother, and subordinated the two other brothers, Adarnase and Guram, to him.

Bagrat turned out to be an able and shrewd ruler. He skilfully used the help Byzantium rendered him and the Arabs' forces against his political rivals. He almost fully restored the domains of his father and took possession of Kartli as well. When Bugha Turk fought in Georgia, Bagrat was against the Tbilisi Emir, the more so as the latter was supported by the King of Abkhazia who on his part was trying to occupy Kartli. With the help of the Arab commander, Bagrat managed to defeat the king of Abkhazia and drive him out of Kartli. This was not the end of fighting for Kartli. It will take us long to describe all the wars, so we will only say that the correlation of forces changed very quickly. Yesterday's allies might have become enemies the next day and vice versa. There were fights inside the principalities as well. For instance, in the kingdom of Abkhazia the throne was temporarily occupied by the representatives of another family - the Shavlianis (861-881) after the youngest son of Leon - Giorgi. The Gardabani princes of the Donauri family became archpriests in Kakheti, bloodthirsty battles took place between the descendants of Ashot Bagrationi. Ashot's grandson, Nasr, son of Guram, treacherously killed his cousin, David, son of Bagrat (881). The latter had the title of Kuropalates. It was followed by fights among relatives that lasted for a long time. Nasr was supported by the King of Abkhazia - Bagrat, the son of Demetre, and the Prince of Ossets - Bagatar. They were supported and helped by Byzantium. This alliance was opposed by Adarnase, son of the assassinated David Kuropalates. He turned to Armenia for help. Adarnase defeated his adversaries





by the bank of the Mtkvari River, pursued Nasr, his father's killer, and killed him near the village of Aspindza, in Samtskhe. Adarnase declared himself king of Georgia in 888 after this victory. It was a political act of paramount importance. First, Adarnase Bagrationi declared himself the only legal pretender to the throne of Kartli which was claimed by other Georgian and non-Georgian rulers. On the other hand, it was the declaration of independence of the house of the Bagrationis, turned against the autocratic claims of the Caesar of Byzantium. Soon Adarnase, the king and Kuropalates of the Georgians, interfered in the affairs of Armenia too. In 891 his faithful ally Ashot, king of Armenia, died. Adarnase immediately went to Armenia. The funeral ceremonies over, he made Ashot's heir, Sumbat, take off his mourning clothes and put on the royal attire. Sumbat's uncle Abbas who wanted to become king himself, took this as an insult, and captured Adarnase on his way back and put him in prison. The king of Armenia Sumbat paid a large ransom to free his ally, the king of Georgia.

In 904 Konstantine, king of Abkhazia, occupied Kartli. Adarnase, king of Georgia, and Sumbat, king of Armenia immediately began to fight against him. The allies defeated Konstantine, taking him prisoner and sent him to Ani. After four months of captivity the king of Armenia liberated Konstantine, king of Abkhazia, and yesterday's enemies became allies. Adarnase did not like this turn of events, but waited for a suitable moment to take his revenge. And indeed, in 914 when the Arab commander Abul Cassim came to Armenia and then to Georgia, Adarnase took the side of the Arabs. The frightened Sumbat tried to find refuge in the mountains of Abkhazia, but the emir who followed him, captured and hanged him in the city of Dvin.

Abul Cassim's invasion in 914 was the Arabs' last big campaign in Georgia. He seized the Ujarma and Bochorma strongholds, raided Samtskhe and Javakheti. It shows that the Arabs wanted to restore their domination in Georgia and Transcaucasia by means of severe repressions. However, this campaign did not help the caliphs and their domination was over from the middle of the tenth century. As it has been mentioned, only the emirs remained and they were little different from the local feudal lords.

The invasion of Abul Cassim made Konstantine, king of Abkhazia, retreat for some time, but very soon he began conquering new territories again and with this purpose he contacted Kakheti princes. The allies conquered Hereti and divided it among themselves.

The kingdom of Abkhazia became especially powerful in the reign of Konstantine's son, Giorgi (927-957). Giorgi subordinated part of Kakheti. He also exercised his authority over the tribes in the Northern Caucasus. The Alans embraced Christianity on his initiative. The Abkhazian Kingdom was as powerful in the reign of Giorgi's son, Leon, but after his death there was a dissension and trouble between his heirs and Egrisi-Abkhazian Kingdom lost its leading place and Tao-Klarjeti took it.

Tao-Klarjeti in the Tenth Century

The main rivals of Egrisi and Abkhazian kings in the struggle for superiority were the Bagrationis of Tao-Klarjeti. In the first half of the tenth century, their domains reached the upper gorge of the river Araxes, and bordered the Byzantine domains there. The founder of the principality, Ashot I, was considered a vassal of great Byzantium and



as we have seen he gained power with the assistance of Byzantium. Later on, the attitude of Tao-Klarjeti princes towards Byzantium became cooler and had only a formal character. For instance, separate representatives of the Bagrationi family received various titles of high rank at the Emperor's court - of Kuropalates, magistros, patrician, etc. In other respect, they were factually independent. This fact was specially emphasized after Adarnase Kuropalates had been conferred the title of "the King of Georgians". The emperor's court of Byzantium still tried to interfere in the internal affairs of the principality and to strengthen its influence there in this way. The political and social structure of the Tao-Klarjeti principality i.e. "the Kingdom of Georgians" was of a master and serf-type with a hierarchical vassal system. Theoretically the main branch among the Bagrationis, whose property was Tao-Klarjeti, were the descendants of Bagrat I who had been given the title of "the King of Georgians", but even among them the one who had this title was not always the first. Superiority belonged to the one who possessed real power and authority. Such was, for instance, the prince of Tao, David III. He was *eristavi-eristavi* and Kuropalates in the second half of the tenth century. At that time Bagrat III, called *Regveni* (ignoramus, young, unexperienced), had the title of "King of Georgians", but his authority was much lower than that of David III, called "great".

David III was famous in the whole of the East. His contemporary Armenian annalist Stephanos of Taron wrote, "Great Kuropalates David stood higher than all the kings of our times with his kind and peace-loving heart. David established peace and order in all the countries of the East, especially in Armenia and Georgia. He ceased wars which were permanently unleashed from all sides and defeated all the neighboring peoples".

His authority became greater especially after he had taken part in the suppression of the revolt of Bardas Skleros. From 976 to 978 Asia Minor was the arena of a civil war. One of the most powerful commanders of Asia Minor Bardas Skleros rose against the young Emperor Basil II (976-1025), he defeated the emperor's troops several times and even declared himself emperor. The insurgents raided the territories bordering David's domains. This threatened his country with danger too, therefore David immediately agreed to take part in the fight against the insurgents, the more so as the emperor promised to give him large territories as a reward. The emperor's court sent him a letter by the hand of Ioane, who was a monk in the monastery on Mount Athos, asking for help. Ioane had been a famous Georgian commander once and his secular name was Tornike. David III gathered a cavalry unit of 12,000 men and charged the same Tornike and Jojiki with commanding them. In 978, the united troops of the Byzantines and Georgians inflicted a crushing defeat on the insurgent Bardas Skleros on the banks of the river Halys, near Pancalea. Skleros escaped. The Georgians got hold of enormous wealth in the way of booty. It enabled Tornike-Ioane to build a well-known Georgian monastery in Chalcedon, on Mount Athos. Apart from this, the Emperor gave David Kuropalates much land, part of which had belonged to Byzantium, and part was occupied by Mohammedans, and David was allowed to occupy those lands by force. These countries were Karin or the district of Erzurum, the whole country of Basiani, Klissurs, the stronghold of Sevuk in Mardalia, the districts of Parchi and Ahahunia near Lake Van, the fortress of Khalto-Archishi, etc.

David annexed the above-mentioned countries, but their possession soon became doubtful, for he involuntarily appeared to be involved in complicated political peripetia. In



986, Bardas Skleros again turned up in the area. Basil II opposed him with powerful troops commanded by Bardas Phokas. Phokas again summoned David to help them. Bardas treacherously imprisoned Skleros, but he betrayed the emperor too and with his troops, together with Georgians set out for Constantinople. The horrified Basil turned to the great prince of Kiev, Vladimir, for help and received an army of 6,000 men from him. But everything was decided unexpectedly. Bardas Phokas died before fighting began and Basil II won a victory quite easily. He directed his troops towards Tao. Being in a critical situation, David was forced to begin negotiations and promise the emperor that after his death the lands of Tao would become the property of Byzantium. In the following years, there was a long dispute between the Byzantine Empire and Georgia about David's inheritance. This time the political balance between these two countries was restored temporarily. In the 990s David continued attacking neighboring Mohammedan rulers. A great number of Turks had settled down in Armenian territory in the period of Arab domination. Moslem emirs sat in such important cities of Armenia as Manzikert, Khloth, Berkri, Archesh and others. In 990, David occupied the rich city of Manzikert. In 997, he besieged the city of Khloth, north-east of Lake Van. In 998, he was opposed by a coalition of Mohammedan troops consisting of 100,000 men commanded by Emir Mamlan, but a united army of Georgians and Armenians, commanded by Taniel, son of Ochopintre, crushed the enemy. The Georgians followed the defeated foe until Archesh.

That David III was a powerful ruler is proved by the splendid architectural monuments such as Bana and Oshki that were built in his time. David minted silver money with the Georgian legend, "Christ, have mercy on David Kuropalates". He did his best to develop Georgian culture and make it thriving. By his order books were written and translated both in Georgia and beyond its borders. Bibliophiles working on Mount Athos presented a great number of books to David Kuropalates, and David Kuropalates allowed them to translate those books. This general Georgian policy of his was the reason that the leaders struggling for uniting Georgia chose him to be the head of this great movement.

Georgian Culture from the Eighth to the Tenth Centuries

The Arab rule did not manage to have a negative effect on Georgian culture. In spite of a very unfavorable political situation, it retained its original national form. In those hard times, Georgian culture held an advanced position in the struggle against the Arab rule and retaining the national identity of the Georgian people, and after the country had been liberated from the Arab domination, it began to develop steadily. Gradually the Georgian culture reached a level equal to the leader of the world civilization — Byzantium — and even became its rival.

It is known that in the Middle Ages not only the culture of the Christian countries of the Middle East developed on the foundation of Byzantine culture, but the culture of Western Europe as well. Georgia also used Byzantine culture widely. Brilliant works on theology, philosophy and various branches of science, such as jurisprudence, mathematics, natural sciences, medicine, grammar, astronomy, history were translated into Georgian. This fact is also noteworthy from the point of view that many specimens of Byzantine



literature and science, whose Greek originals are lost, are preserved only in the form of Georgian translations. For instance, a number of works of Hyppolitus of Rome, the so called *Jerusalem Law*, quite a few hagiographic works, etc. Apart from Greek, the Georgians translated from other languages as well, especially from Arabic.

Many original literary and scientific works were written in Georgia from the eighth to tenth centuries. We have already mentioned the literary work "*The Martyrdom of Abo from Tbilisi*" by Ioane Sabanisdze. Remarkable hagiographic works must be mentioned too. These are: *The life of Serapion of Zarzma* by Basil of Zarzma, *The Life of Ilarion, the Georgian, The Martyrdom of Constanti Kakha*, *The Martyrdom of Nine Brothers of Kola*, *The Life of St. Nino* by unknown authors, *Gobron's Martyrdom* by Stephane Mtbevari and *The Life of Grigol of Khandzta* by Giorgi Merchule. The latter must be specially mentioned. These hagiographic works are important historic sources as well. They reveal the life, economy, social system, and the cultural level of those days. They show what a high level the Georgian literary language had reached. It should be noted that the Georgian literary language was the only language used in literature, state rule and management, social relations and church in Kartli, as well as in Tao-Klarjeti, Kakheti, Hereti and in the Egrisi-Abkhazia kingdom. The Georgian language extended its borders to the Northern Caucasus by means of Christianity, among the Circassians and Alans, in the first place. Such extension of the Georgian language and the development of the Georgian literature made the public figures of those days conscious of its value and worth. The tenth century writer Ioane Zosime dedicated an ode, full of admiration, to the Georgian language – "Praise and Glorification of the Georgian Language". The author ascribes a special role to the Georgian language among the languages of the world in this hymn. The remarkable representatives of ecclesiastical poetry or hymnography of those days are Michael Modrekili, Ioane Minchkhi and Ioane Mtbevari. Michael Modrekili was the one among them who compiled a collection of hymnography with special musical symbols pointing to the places where the voice was to be raised or lowered and the rhythm of the performance while the hymn was being performed.

From these days, there exists the secular belles lettres, both translated and original, but only short fragments of these have reached our times. Of historiographic works, several editions of an unknown author's *Moktsevai Kartlisai* (*The Conversion of Kartli*) have been preserved. This work briefly tells the history of Georgia from the period of the establishment of the Kartli kingdom to the ninth century. Among the Georgian society of those days a remarkable philosophic work of art, called *Balavar's Wisdom* was widely spread. It was an Eastern legend about Buddha, translated from the Arabic, and worked out from the Christian point of view. *Balavar's Wisdom*, due to its profound ideas and beautiful artistic narration became well known across the Christian world. The famous Georgian public figure, Euthymius the Athonite, rendered this work from Georgian into Greek in the eighth century, and in the first half of the same century it was translated into Latin as well and spread throughout Europe.

In this period there were theological schools in Georgia where young people were taught to read and write Georgian and some special subjects. There was a custom among the nobility to put their children in charge of private persons with the purpose of bringing them up. To get a higher education young people were sent abroad, mostly. The centers



of education, scholarship and science in Georgia were monasteries. There were many of them established from the sixth century.

The building of monasteries was especially intense in Tao-Klarjeti from the end of the eighth century, headed by Grigol of Khandzta and his disciples. This was the time when such important ecclesiastical – cultural centers as Opiza, Shatberdi, Ishkhani, Tskarostavi, Tbeti, Oshki, Berta, Parkhali, Bana, Khandzta, etc. appeared in Tao-Klarjeti.

There were many Georgian monasteries abroad as well. Sabatsminda Monastery in Palestine played an especially great part in the history of the Georgian culture. From the eighth to the tenth centuries intensive literary work was going on there. In addition, an important cultural-educational center was Georgians' monastery colony established on Mount Sinai in the tenth century. Our ancient manuscripts are still preserved on Mount Sinai today.

Georgian art greatly developed in this period, especially after the end of Arab domination. Alongside the splendid monuments of architecture created in this period, we can already mention quite a few specimens of monumental painting. Georgian painting by its general character and stylistic features is closer to the Byzantine art than Georgian architecture, which was developing quite independently and very often reached higher peaks than the Byzantine architecture of those days.

Georgian architecture of that period is characterized by a variety of themes and forms. From the last decades of the tenth century a new style was finally formed characteristic of the Georgian architecture of the Middle Ages. Building gains momentum, great cathedrals are built in bishoprics, elongated, rectangularly planned, domed churches are erected, creating the form of a cross in their plans. A dome leaning on four columns is placed on a high drum. Great importance is given to adorning facades with ornaments and decorative arches. Splendid monuments of this style are Oshki and Khakhuli cathedrals of bishoprics in Tao, built in the last decade of the tenth century.

The monuments of secular architecture: palaces, castles, and buildings have not survived in great quantities, but whatever has survived clearly shows a wide range of the construction works of this kind in Georgia in the period under study.

Round monumental sculpture did not develop in the Georgia of Middle Ages. A relief sculpture, created to decorate architectural monuments, acquired great importance instead. Also sculpture in gold and silver and gold reliefs developed to adorn icons, crosses and other church paraphernalia. Alongside the goldsmiths' art, the art of enamel also developed, mainly cloisonne enamel, distinguished by the most beautiful matching of colors. From the ninth century, adorning manuscript books with miniatures begins. Georgian miniatures are specimens of high quality art.

Social-Economic and Political Foundations of the Unification of Georgia

The process of establishing feudal kingdoms and principalities in Georgia coincided with the time of its liberation from the Arabs' domination. The liberation from the Arabs' domination and putting an end to the destructive invasions accompanying it (Georgia was raided not only by the Arabs, but the Khazars and other North Caucasian nomadic



hordes as well) created normal conditions for economy in Georgia. The productive forces of the country developed even more. Agriculture became more intensive. This is corroborated by the existence of large irrigation canals and elaborate small canals to make the water flow from the plains up to the hills, skilfully built water pipes, fields of various kinds of wheat, vineyards, planted with great knowledge and experience, orchards, gardens of mulberry trees, melon fields, vegetable gardens and hay fields. Artisanry separated from agriculture and its products became objects of consumption for a wider sphere of society. New towns appeared—centers of trade and artisanry. The ninth and tenth centuries in the history of Georgia are the time of building new towns. Such new towns were Dmanisi, Artanuji, Akhalkalaki (*Akhalkalaki* means a new town. Transi.), Tmogvi, Oltisi, Akhaltsikhe, Telavi, etc. Old towns and cities, such as Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Rustavi, Samshvilde, and Khunani also came to life and became richer. Artisanry and trade began to flourish in these cities. Almost all the branches of artisanry known in Nearer Asia and Byzantium, developed in Georgia. Barter spread widely, both inside the country and with foreign countries. A significant part of the population was involved in trade. Towns and their populations, consisting of merchants and artisans whose sphere of interest up to that time had been the economy of feudal lords and their domains, grew up, became an independent force and opposed their masters. A significant stratum of merchants and artisans, and the inhabitants of towns turned into fighters against strengthening central power and feudal separatism.

Changes occur in the social sphere as well. The *aznauris* made serfs of a great part of the lowest stratum of the population (the *mdabioris*), and to preserve their domination over them they needed a powerful king. At the same time, the representatives of the high nobility oppressed petty *aznaurs* of scanty means. Being in the service of the king of a united Georgia promised them better prospects of promotion than the service and serfdom of the *aznauris* of high rank. Thus, the petty *aznauris* and those of average means, being quite a numerous stratum, were for a powerful king of a united Georgia, while the high nobility were against this. The great power of the king would reduce their licentious behavior; confiscate their serfs and the lands that they had seized after they had got hold of the *saeristavos* and other territories.

The Georgian church was also interested in the unification of Georgia. The strong power of the king would cut off the licentious behavior of *didaznauris* (high nobility) and protect the domains of the church from their wilful actions. The language of the divine service in all the churches in all parts of Georgia (Kartli, Kakhet-Hereti, Tao-Klarjeti, Egris-Abkhazia) was Georgian. Rich philosophical, theological and hagiographic literature was created in this language. The books of the Old and the New Testaments were translated into the Georgian language from the fourth and fifth centuries, they were intensively edited to achieve perfection, and commentary was added to them. And what is more, Georgian Christianity spread in the Northern Caucasus. The development and strengthening of these processes needed a strong political support, which would be the king's power of a united Georgia.

The danger coming from foreign countries demanded the unification of the country. The conquerors fought against Georgia not only by invading it, but also by encouraging and assisting the reactionary high nobility in wrecking the process of Georgia's unification.



Thus, all the progressive forces were interested in the unification of Georgia, but a significant part of the *didi-aznauris* fought implacably against it. The establishment of a unified state of Georgia was going on in the situation of this life-and-death struggle.

Bagrat III – the First King of a United Georgia. Giorgi I

In the tenth century, the fight for superiority among the Georgian kingdoms and principalities became fierce. The superiority of the Abkhaz-Egrisi kingdom was evident. The kings of Abkhazia-Egrisi, first Konstantine (893-922) and then his heir – Giorgi II (927-957) made attempts to occupy Hereti together with Kartli, these attempts failed due to the endeavors of Kartli high nobility. Leon II (957-967) did not succeed either, and after his death a long fight for the Egrisi-Abkhazia throne began. It was his brothers — Demetre and Theodosius — who fought for it. Demetre captured Theodosius and had his eyes burnt out. Demetre died childless in 975. The blind Theodosius' only heir was his nephew, his sister's son, Bagrat, the son of Gurgen "King of Georgians". At the same time, he was the adopted son of the great David Kuropalates. Thus, Bagrat, the son of Gurgen, was the heir of these three great rulers. Therefore, it is natural that his person should have attracted the attention of the statesmen interested in the unification of Georgia. Therefore, Ioane Marushisdze, the *eristavi* of Kartli, addressed David III Kuropalates with a proposal that either he himself should become ruler of Kartli or assist his adopted son, brought up by him, in becoming king.

David supported the idea of his adopted son's becoming a king without hesitation, and in spite of the fact that Bagrat was not yet of age, he moved to Kartli with his army in 975. At this time Uplistsikhe, the political center of Kartli, was besieged by Kvirike, the *khorepiscopus* of Kakheti. Having learned about David Kuropalates' entering Kartli, he immediately left Kartli. David Kuropalates was met by Ioane Marushisdze at Uplistsikhe. There *didaznauris* (noblemen of high rank) got together as well. David ordered them to obey Bagrat. As Bagrat had not come of age yet David appointed his father Gurgen his regent.

While the blind Theodosius reigned in Egrisi-Abkhazia there were disturbances inside the country, therefore Bagrat ascended the throne in Kutaisi at the request of the local nobility. As for the blind Theodosius, Bagrat sent him to his adopted father David. Bagrat began ruling the country independently from 980 when he came of age.

At the very beginning of Bagrat's reign disagreement arose between the king and the high nobility of Kartli. The latter were afraid that the king's strengthening would cause the end of the immunity of their estates. At the same time, the king would inquire about the lands they had appropriated. Therefore, when King Bagrat expressed his wish to move to Kartli from Western Georgia he was met at the frontier by Kartli noblemen of high rank, headed by Kavtar Tbeli. They put up a strong resistance. Bagrat fought them, defeated and dispersed them. He entered Kartli, settled in Uplistsikhe and began to rule over the country. The master of Trialeti and the *eristavi* of Kldekari — Rati Bagvashi — continued to revolt. In 989 Bagrat defeated and subjugated him too. Having taken decisive administrative steps, he established order in the country.



In 1001 the king of Tao, David III Kuropalates, the adopted father of Bagrat III, died. Basil II, Emperor of Byzantium, immediately headed for Tao with his army. King Bagrat and his father Gurgen also came there. Basil, the Ceasar, occupied David's domain – Tao. Thus, it was impossible to inherit David's domains without war. However, Bagrat and Gurgen had the foresight not to wage war against Basil. Basil II bestowed Byzantine titles on father and son, those of Kuropalates and magistros, and these by violating the rule of seniority and juniority, but Bagrat and Gurgen preferred to concede at that time and received this favor of the Emperor with gratitude.

Bagrat's father, Gurgen, died in 1008 and his domains – Shavshet-Klarjeti and Javakheti were annexed to Bagrat's kingdom. After this, the title of Bagrat was "King of Abkhazians and Georgians", and after he had occupied first Hereti (Rani) and then Kakheti by force in 1010, he was called "the King of Abkhazians, Georgians, Rans and Kakhetians".

Bagrat had to fight to incorporate Kakheti and Hereti. Kakheti Khorepiscopus David (976-1010) had occupied Kartli fortresses. Bagrat requested that the ruler of Kakheti leave those fortresses, but his request was ignored. Bagrat attacked Kakheti from Tianeti and occupied Hereti where he appointed ruler Abulali, "a faithful and trustworthy" person.

Bagrat III had taken radical steps to strengthen his power in his kingdom before he went to fight against Kakheti. The annalist is enraptured by the king's activities and compares them with the skill of the captain of a ship. "Like a skilful captain of a ship, he arranged all the affairs of Abkhazia". He drove away the unruly officials and appointed trustworthy ones.

The system of master and serf, i.e. of a suzerain and vassal, meant voluntary devotion of the serf to his master, and this had a decisive significance for the master – suzerain's power, but the serf could leave his master and become somebody else's serf. Bagrat violated this principle and demanded absolute obedience from vassal princes. What is more, he confiscated the possessions of recalcitrant princes and gave them to the persons whom he trusted and who were faithful to him. Bagrat had not carried out such radical changes in Hereti at the beginning. He does not seem to have oppressed the local noblemen or confiscated their estates. He subjected the country only as his vassal and appointed Abulali ruler, a person "faithful to him and trustworthy" (a vassal-prince). Nevertheless, great feudal-lords of Hereti (princes-seniors) feared that Bagrat would finally take the same steps there, as in the other parts of Georgia, i.e. he would dismiss them for some petty recalcitrance, confiscate their domains and appoint other officials, new *eristavis* devoted to him, in their places. Therefore, as soon as Bagrat left Hereti "the men of Hereti betrayed Bagrat and took the side of David and the latter occupied Hereti".

The noblemen of Hereti preferred to be the vassals of David Khorepiscopus, a ruler having less power, than Bagrat III, the powerful king of a united Georgia, aspiring to autocracy.

After this Bagrat again waged war against Hereti and took decisive steps to annex the country. He took by force not only the fortresses of Hereti, but those of Kakheti as well. He took the fortress of Bochorma where the new, great prince of Kakheti Khorepiscopus Kvirike III (1010-1037) had taken refuge. After two years of fighting, "he conquered the whole of Kakheti and Hereti, took Kvirike along with him and kept him at his court." To strengthen his power in the newly annexed Kakheti and Hereti, Bagrat took the same steps as he had in western Georgia, "He replaced the recalcitrant officials by those devoted to him who willingly obeyed his orders. These were the new *eristavis*



appointed by him. The institute of *eristavis* restored its old meaning, i.e. that of being officials. The *eristavis* appointed by Bagrat were officials governing the *saeristavos* (*mosakargaveni*) and not senior-owners (princes).

Thus, Georgia was gradually united and becoming a powerful state. The remaining conqueror rulers in Transcaucasia did not like its unification and strengthening. For instance, the Emir of Ganja, Fadlun, incessantly attacked the territories of Kakhet-Hereti and tried to drive Bagrat away from there.

King Bagrat, with the help of Gaguik I (991-1020), the kng of Armenia, began an offensive against Fadlun. In 1011, the allies invaded the Emirate and devastated the country. They besieged and seized the town of Shamkhor. In 1012, the Emir of Ganja, Fadlun, was compelled to sue for peace, promising to be Georgia's vassal. The king of Georgia made the Emir of Ganja pay annual tribute and take part in wars of Georgia when it was necessary.

Bagrat III died in 1014. His remains were interred in the Bedia cathedral, built by him.

Bagrat III laid a strong foundation for Georgia's unification. True, the Tbilisi Emirate still remained beyond the frontiers of Georgia, but its days were numbered too. It was necessary to take shrewd steps. Unfortunately, his heir Giorgi I (1014-1027), did not show the same foresight. He turned all his attention to the return of the territories seized by Byzantium in the reign of David Kuropalates. However, he was unable to do it, and lost the annexed Kakhet-Hereti as well. The high nobility of Kakhet-Hereti captured the *eristavi*, appointed by King Bagrat, and compelled King Giorgi to release Kvirike, the imprisoned king of Kakheti. Thus, Kakhet-Hereti was lost for a united Georgia again, and Kvirike III (1010-1037) became king there.

The Emperor of Byzantium, Basil II, waged war against Bulgarians in 1014-1016. Giorgi I took advantage of this fact and occupied Tao. Caesar Basil inflicted a crushing defeat on the Bulgarians (He was given the name of the slaughterer of Bulgarians for it) and headed for Georgia with all his army. The decisive battle took place at the village of Shirimni, where the Georgians were defeated. In 1022, King Giorgi was compelled to agree to very hard terms of the peace treaty: the king of Georgia returned David Kuropalates' domains to Byzantium and gave them his young son Bagrat as a hostage for three years. Giorgi I died unexpectedly in 1027.

Bagrat IV. Giorgi II. The internal and foreign affairs of Georgia in the eleventh century

In 1027, the seven-year-old Bagrat IV was crowned king of Georgia. The noblemen of high rank took advantage of the fact that the king was underage and cast off all restraint. They even took the side of the enemy. In 1028, the army of Byzantium entered the Georgian territory from Tao-Klarjeti and many *didaznauris* surrendered their strongholds to the enemy without fighting. Some of the priests of high rank also took the side of the Byzantines. In this critical situation, some patriots appeared who opposed the enemy. The Bishop Saba Mtbvari was one of those who distinguished himself in this respect. He built a stronghold in Tbeti (Shavsheti), gathered an army from the local



inhabitants and put up a courageous resistance to the enemy. Soon it became possible to start peace negotiations. Georgia was represented by Bagrat's mother, Queen Mariam, and Mtskheta Catholicos Melkisedek at the negotiations. The Caesar of Byzantium married his niece Elene (his brother's daughter) to Bagrat IV and the countries that had been at war, concluded peace. Unfortunately, Elene died very soon and this formal basis of the peace between Byzantium and Georgia was shattered. The Byzantines began carrying out secret plots in Georgia again. They promised Bagrat's half-brother Dimitri the king's throne and won him over. The latter, being a prince, had been given the stronghold of Anacopia in Abkhazia. The Byzantine agents' endeavors failed. They did not succeed in making him king of Georgia. He was compelled to flee to Byzantium. However, in compensation, he delivered his fortress-city Anacopia to Byzantium.

The situation in Georgia became critical in the east as well. The Emir of Ganja refused to be the vassal of Georgia and even started an offensive. The recalcitrant neighbor was defeated and made to retreat by the Georgian army, headed by the Kldekari Eristavi Liparit, the son of Liparit, and Kartli Eristavi Ivane, the son of Abaza. While Bagrat IV was underage, these noblemen governed the country, but they did not forget their own interests either. For instance, Liparit, the son of Liparit, was greatly interested in abolishing the Tbilisi Emirate, for his domains bordered the territories of the Emirate, and he hoped to get the greater part of the emirate as his domain.

In 1032 Liparit, the son of Liparit, and Ivane, the son of Abaza, captured Japhar, the Tbilisi Emir, and asked the king to occupy the emirate. But the king, who was still under age (he was 13 years old), following the advice of other noblemen, liberated the Emir and subjected him as a vassal. Liparit was, of course, offended. Five years later Bagrat, taking the advice of the Kldekari Eristavi, decided to abolish the Tbilisi Emirate and besieged the city. The siege lasted two years and the city was ready to surrender when Bagrat lifted the siege and concluded peace with the emir without asking the Kldekari Eristavi about it in 1040. This made Liparit an enemy of the young king and this feud soon resulted in a great war.

In 1045, the Byzantines abolished the Armenian kingdom of Ani and annexed the country to Byzantium. The alarmed Armenian authority delivered Ani to the king of Georgia, for his mother, Queen Mariam was the daughter of the king of Armenia Senacherim. Bagrat stationed his officials and garrison in Ani. Such a development of events was a great victory for the king of Georgia and the obvious failure of the Byzantine policy. Bagrat attacked the stronghold of Anacopia too and decided to drive the Byzantines away from there as well; he was also getting ready to conquer the coastal fortress Khupati of Klarjeti, but unexpectedly his attention was attracted by other, more important, events.

The Tbilisi Emir, Japhar, died in 1046, leaving no heir, and the authorities of the Tbilisi citizens delivered the city to Bagrat. Bagrat left another commander at the fortress of Anacopia and he himself hastened towards Tbilisi. The citizens of Tbilisi gave Bagrat a grand welcome at the approaches to the city and took him into the capital of Georgia with great festivities. However, not all of the Tbilisi citizens wanted to give the city to Bagrat. These were mainly representatives of the upper layer of the Mohammedan population of the city. They destroyed the bridge and shut themselves up in the Isani fortress on the left bank of the Mtkvari, ready to fight. Bagrat received the keys to the town in a festive



situation and started fighting against those in the Isani fortress. He used machines employed for siege and threw boulders and shot arrows at the fortress. While the king was fighting against the Isani fortress, Kakheti King Gaguik, accompanied by his noblemen, arrived and asked for peace. Bagrat agreed to the proposal of the king of Kakheti at that time and continued fighting for the fortress. The fight lasted the whole summer, but with no effect. Meanwhile Liparit's treacherous act resulted in the loss of Ani and Tbilisi as well.

Liparit treacherously captured the *eristavis* left to govern Ani. Taking advantage of this, Catholicos of Armenia Petros, for his self-interest, delivered Ani to the Greeks. Bagrat left Tbilisi and went to punish Liparit. After this, a ruthless fight between the king and traitor Kldekari Eristavi began that lasted for over ten years. Liparit was a powerful feudal lord himself and he had the support of the Caesar of Byzantium. Byzantium considered the strengthened Georgia to be a rival who was going to drive her out of the East; therefore she did her best to hinder the process of Georgia's unification. The insurgent Kldekari Eristavi became a splendid weapon for the Byzantine politicians. It was due to their assistance that Liparit was mostly victorious in the fight against Bagrat. Liparit had done great harm to Bagrat, consequently the worn out Bagrat was compelled to go to Byzantium to ask for the Caesar's help in reconciling with Liparit. The Caesar reconciled Bagrat IV and his disobedient vassal. Bagrat was king only nominally, and Liparit was acknowledged to be the prince of the whole of Southern Georgia. Liparit took advantage of Bagrat's absence from Georgia and crowned his young son Giorgi king, appointing himself his guardian. In fact, Liparit ruled Georgia. However, other feudal lords could not bear his aggrandizement. Meskhi *aznauris*, headed by Sula Kalmakheli, captured Liparit and his son Ivane and brought them before Bagrat. The king compelled Liparit to take monastic vows and drove him away from Georgia, but he spared his son, Ivane, only deprived him of the position of Kldekari Eristavi. As for his family estates, he did not confiscate them and left them in Ivane's possession. He also appointed Ivane military commander. Bagrat and Ivane's reconciliation brought about the strengthening of Bagrat and he had a successful war in Kakhet-Hereti. He intended to annex these territories to Georgia. However, this intention was not realized, owing to the invasion of the Seljuk-Turks.

The Seljuk-Turks, Invasions of Georgia

Georgia was threatened by great danger in the 1060s. A wave of numerous Turkish tribes coming from Central Asia, headed by the Seljuk Dynasty, fell like a natural calamity upon the whole of the Near East.

These nomadic herdsmen hordes with their families, women and children, moving westwards, conquering countries with fire and sword, turned flourishing parts of countries into their kishlaks and pastures. Their ideological standard was Islam; therefore, they massacred the Christian population. The Seljuk-Turks conquered Iran, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine; invaded Jerusalem, reached the Mediterranean Sea. According to the legend, the Turks' Sultan, Malik Shah (1072-1092), entered the Mediterranean Sea on horseback and thanked Allah for such great favor.

Seljuk-Turks inflicted a crushing defeat on Byzantium as well, and in 1071, they took Emperor Romanus Diogenes himself prisoner in the battle at Manzikert. Byzantium was



compelled to give a great part of her Eastern provinces to the Turks. Thus, Georgia found herself alone face to face with the enormous forces of the Turks.

Seljuk Turks first invaded Georgia in 1064, under the command of Sultan Alp-Arslan. They devastated Southern Georgia, seized the city of Akhalkalaki in Javakheti, plundered it and slaughtered a great number of the population. The Turks also raided Shavsheti, Klarjeti and Tao. The legend says that the Mtkvari was red with blood. The Turks this time left Georgia without concluding an armistice. This invasion of the Turks did not drive Bagrat IV to despair. On the contrary, he went on fighting to occupy Kakheti and attacked Shirvan whose ruler Phariburz Shirvan Shah surrendered to the Turks and agreed to pay tribute.

In 1068, the Seljuk Sultan Alp-Arslan started for Georgia again, invading it from the east this time. The Turks devastated Kartli and then Argveti. A severe winter forced the Sultan to leave Georgia without concluding a peace treaty. Before leaving, he gave Tbilisi and Rustavi to Fadlun, the ruler of Ganja.

However, King Bagrat continued acting relentlessly. As soon as the Turk-Seljuks left Georgia he attacked Fadlun and his army, massacred it, capturing Fadlun himself. He also defeated the Tbilisi Emir, occupying his fortresses and making him his vassal. When Bagrat IV died in 1072, he had never surrendered to the Turks nor had he paid tribute to them.

His heir, Giorgi II (1072-1089), conducted quite a different policy. He was a comparatively weak-willed ruler and was unable to choose the correct way of action. He had no success in either foreign or home affairs. First, the high nobility of the country rebelled against him and the situation in the country became disturbed.

Instead of punishing them, King Giorgi II granted them favors and enlarged their domains. Such policy made the rebels more insolent and the king lost all influence. Meanwhile the Turks started a new offensive. Having concluded an armistice with Byzantium, the Turks moved towards Georgia to conquer it. Great invasions of Turks began from 1080. They were called *Didi Turkoba* (The Great Turkish Conquests) in Georgian sources. Sultan Malik-Shah brought an enormous number of Turkish tribes into Georgia. King Giorgi admitted himself to be defeated, went to Ispahan to the Shah and undertook to pay a yearly tribute.

However, more and more hordes of Turkish nomadic tribes settled in Georgia. The oppressed Georgian population was on the verge of extinction. Nomad Turcomans had occupied a great part of the lands, used for growing crops, and this would cause the collapse of the Georgian landownership and the centuries-long cultural economy. The only thing Giorgi received from Malik-Shah was an auxiliary detachment of warriors for occupying Kakheti and Hereti, but the King failed to do it. In 1088, there was a terrible earthquake whose aftershocks lasted the whole year and destroyed very many city-fortresses and villages. The winter was severe that year, and in spring it was followed by a terrible inundation. There is no doubt that Giorgi II would have been unable to cope with those hardships.



King David IV, the Builder

In 1089, a palace revolution occurred in Georgia. Statesmen interested in the future of the country forced the king to abdicate in favor of his 16 year-old son, David. The political course of Georgia concerning the Turks and the high nobility was radically changed after David IV became king and this group of progressive political leaders began to rule the country. Every action and every step of King David revealed his foresight and determination. Of course, it was the experience and merit of persons devoted to this country that supported the young King. They were headed by Giorgi Mtsignobartukhutsesi (the highest official in Old Georgia), the man who had raised him and who was his senior fellow political leader. David himself revealed a strong will, great talent and a remarkable ability of a military leader.

The urgent task of the country was to subdue the most powerful feudal lords and to drive the Turkish invaders out of the country. The king began with the reorganization of the military forces. Numerous defeats had disorganized the Georgian army and had destroyed its morale. David formed small, but well-trained military detachments of petty and average *aznauris*. Their numbers were gradually increasing and they were becoming stronger. He attacked and destroyed the raiding Turks with these detachments loyal to him, at the same time he oppressed the Turcomans who had settled in Georgia, and did not let them leave their fortresses. According to the terms of the armistice, he demanded that the Turks should not oppress the local population, for he honestly paid the tribute. He destroyed those who violated these terms and forced the Turknomen to leave the country by and by. The Georgian people were able to return to the devastated estates of their ancestors. Little by little, conditions for normal life and restoring economy were created in the greater part of the country. The results were good. Economic life revived and the population increased. David also began abolishing half-independent domains of the most powerful feudal-lords and curbing the recalcitrance of the high nobility. The first among them was Kldekari *eristavi*-Liparit Bagvashi, as usual, the grandson of the Liparit who had tormented Bagrat IV. David, by his shrewd behavior, made everybody see that it was necessary to punish him and the like of him severely. He captured the incorrigible *eristavi* and drove him out of Georgia. As for his *saeristavo*, he again made it the property of the state. He punished the rebellious Dzagan, son of Abuleti, in the same relentless way. The king overcame the unruliness and opposition of the high nobility by defeating the most powerful feudal lords.

David took important steps to strengthen the king's power. He dismissed the high officials who were promoted only due to their titles and who openly or clandestinely opposed king and employed the *aznauris* who were loyal to him and had distinguished themselves in the service of the country.

Meanwhile the great-united state of Turk-Seljuks came to its end. When Sultan Malik-Shah died in 1092, a relentless struggle for power began in the country between the late Shah's brother and his sons. The emirs and atabegs, rulers of separate parts of the state, took part in it. The result was that the Turkish Empire, united artificially by force, disintegrated, and formed many political units, fighting against one another; all this made it easier for Georgia to fight against them.

At the same time, West European countries unleashed a great war against the Turks to liberate the sacred places of Christians from their domination. This was the so-called



"Crusades" of Christian countries against Mohammedan Turks. These crusades compelled the Turks to turn their attention to the West. At first, they suffered defeat after defeat. In 1097, the European crusaders oppressed the Turks in Asia Minor and Syria, and in 1099, they took Palestine and Jerusalem. This encouraged Byzantium to attack the conqueror-Turks also. Thus, the situation became much better for Georgia; she was not face to face with the Turks alone any longer.

King David assessed the created international situation correctly. He firmly took the side of the crusaders and even sent troops to help the Europeans fighting at Jerusalem, stopped paying tribute to the Shah and began a decisive attack against the Turks on the territory of Georgia.

To win a final victory it was necessary to mobilize all the forces of Georgia. However, such an important part of the country as the kingdom of Kakhet-Hereti, stood aside and did not participate in the war to liberate Georgia from the domination of the Turks. It was an urgent task to make it part of a united Georgia.

Not all the high noblemen supported the idea of becoming part of a united Georgia. Part of them did not even reject taking the side of their enemies in order that they should defend their interests and retain their feudal "immunity". However, the progressive part of the local *aznaurs* was more powerful and they were resolute supporters of the king's unification policy. In 1104, Kakhetian *aznaurs* — Kavtar, Arishiani and Baram — captured their king, Agsartan, who had recently embraced Islam and brought him before the king of Georgia. David occupied Kakheti, turning its greater part into the domain of the kingdom, and appointed Arishiani its ruler. The sultan of the Turks felt greatly upset because of having lost the country, paying tribute, therefore the next year he sent many troops, led by the Ganja Atabeg. Treacherous high nobility joined the enemy, but David won a brilliant victory over the Turks' troops in the battle at Ertsubi in 1105. As the historian, contemporary of those events, tells us King David was fighting in the front ranks, his three horses were killed, and mounted on the fourth he brought this most important war to the end. The annexation of Kakhet-Hereti significantly increased Georgia's economic and military power.

The church played one of the main roles in the unification of Georgia and strengthening the king's power. However, the relatives of the high nobility governed Georgia's church and they sympathized with the reactionary part of great feudal lords more than with the king's power, fighting for the progress of the country. It was necessary to carry out fundamental reforms in the church. Wide ecclesiastical circles, expressing the interests of the majority of the society, demanded such reforms. Progressive ecclesiastics had fought against the domination of the high nobility, against taking hold of ecclesiastical positions by inheritance or paying bribes from the very beginning. To occupy a high position in church the person's merits and not his high birth was to be taken into consideration. The well-known Georgian scholar and ecclesiastic Giorgi the Athonite had such points of view as early as the eleventh century.

In 1105, the All-Georgia Church Council was convened by the King's order to solve questions concerning the church. It took place in Kartli in the cathedrals of Ruisi and Urnisi. That is why this council is known as a Ruis-Urnisi Church Council. The decision of the council was as follows: unworthy bishops lost their posts and worthy ecclesiastical personages took their places. The council passed a resolution by which all the outrageous actions, reigning in various spheres of the Georgian people's life, were eradicated. The



importance of the Ruis-Urbnisi Council is immense. In the first place, it deprived the reactionary opposition of the high nobility of an ally, the church, and assisted both the consolidation of the statehood of Georgia and the moral purification of the nation. At the same time, it was a great political victory of the King's power, and to secure it, David took special measures.

The closest adviser of the King and the manager of his chancellery (*samtsignobro*) was the chancellor (*mtsignobartukhutsesi*) who usually was an ordinary monk. However, he was a very well educated man who was well versed in the affairs of the state. Unlike other high officials who were representatives of the high nobility, he, being a monk, had no interests in estates and inheritance; therefore, he was devoted to the king and the country. David placed this ordinary monk at the head of the state and made him president of other councils. Besides, he gave him one of the highest posts in the church, that of the Bishop of Chqondidi. Thus, he was both, the highest official of the king and the person, having a high post in church. Later on, the *mtsignobart-ukhutsesi* were given other bishoprics too, for instance, of Bedia, Alaverdi, Ujarma, etc. In this way, the king had a control over the activities of the church.

The first Mtsignobart-ukhutsesi Chqondideli was the person who had brought up the king, his political counsellor, Giorgi, the Monk, who had taken an active part in the Ruis-Urbnisi Church Council. Mtsignobart-ukhutsesi Chqondideli's duty was to control church affairs. At the same time he was also appointed head of the organ of the Supreme Court, "court of petitions" (*saajo kari*). His duty was to give advice to the King, but he also had the right to do it. Nothing was done in ruling the country without taking his counsel. Chqondideli-Mtsignobart-Ukhutsesi had the right to interfere in all the affairs. He was called the King's "father" and "vizier", and his post was obviously turned against the officials of high rank coming from the high nobility. Therefore, it is quite natural that the high nobility should have hated such a powerful Chqondideli-Mtsignobart-Ukhutsesi and fought against his power with all the means they could use.

As soon as the situation was stabilized in the country King David began fighting against the Turks, settled in Georgia, more vigorously. In 1110, he occupied the most important fortress-city, Samshvilde. After this, the Turks left the greater part of the Lower Kartli without fighting. In 1115, the Georgians liberated the city of Rustavi too. The conquerors still occupied the capital of Georgia — Tbilisi — but the Georgian forces surrounded it.

In 1117, the town of Gishi, situated in the extreme east of Hereti, was liberated. King David inflicted crushing defeats on the Turkish conquerors in different parts of Georgia. In 1118, Georgians seized the strongest citadel, Lore, which was the Turkish stronghold in Southern Georgia.

The enemy had almost been driven out of Georgia, but there was a danger of their new invasions while they remained in the countries bordering Georgia: Shirvan and Armenia. It was necessary to drive the Turks out of the whole of Transcaucasia. Georgia was to take this mission upon herself. It was a very great and complicated task demanding special measures and preparations, including increasing Georgian military forces. Only the local forces would not be able to cope with it. David and his court took a resolution to use such an important military force as the Qipchaks, a North Caucasian nomadic war-like tribes. Georgia had brought warriors from the Northern Caucasus before too, but it was not sufficient. It was decided to settle a large horde of Qipchaks with their families in Georgia. They were oppressed by the Russian prince Vladimir Monomach and driven



out from the plains of Southern Russia to the Northern Caucasus. The Georgians knew the Qipchaks very well and had vigorous relations with them. David's second wife was the daughter of the Qipchak's Prince Otrok Sharaganisdze. The king of Georgia conducted negotiations with them and persuaded them to move to Georgia.

In 1118 David and his *mtsignobart-ukhutsesi*, Giorgi, went to the Northern Caucasus via the Dariali Pass. They subjugated the Ossets who were at war with Qipchaks, occupied the fortresses of Ossetia, took hostages and guaranteed a peaceful way for the Qipchaks. After this, according to the Georgian chronicler, 40,000 Qipchaks and their families moved to Georgia. David settled them in the regions near the frontiers, gave them land for dwelling-places and livelihood and ordered each family to give the army one armed horseman per family. In this way, David always had a 40,000 men cavalry, consisting of Qipchaks. They were subjected directly to him. The king also formed his personal permanent bodyguard, the *mona-spa*, consisting of 5,000 soldiers. After the king had become so powerful, it is quite natural that the Georgian feudal suzerain and vassals' troops should have become more loyal and trustworthy.

Thus, David, prepared in every way, launched a general offensive against the Turks in Transcaucasia. Georgian troops, led by David's son, Demetre, invaded Shirvan and occupied the city of Qabala. The ruler of Shirvan became a vassal of the king of Georgia.

Such success of Christian Georgia alarmed both the Turks settled in Georgia, and the local Mohammedans, the upper layer of the Mohammedans of the Tbilisi and Dmanisi as well. They turned to Sultan Muhammad of the Seljuks for assistance. The sultan assessed the danger coming from Georgia correctly and decided to launch a coalition offensive. He appealed to the Moslem kings and princes of Nearer Asia to fight against Christian Georgia with united forces and rallied an enormous army under his banner. Muhammad made Nazim Ed-din Elghazi ruler of Iraq, commander-in-chief of this united army. The latter was famous for his fights against crusaders.

In the summer of 1121 an army of Turks and other Mohammedans consisting of almost 300,000 men entered Kartli from several directions and was deployed in the environs of Tsalka, Manglisi, and Trialeti. The 56,000-man Georgian army was several times smaller in number, but their advantage was that they were fighting for independence and their future and they were led by such a great commander as David IV was. The significance of this battle is proved by the fact that its description is preserved not only in the Georgian sources, but in the Armenian, Persian, Arabic chronicles and the annals in European languages as well. For instance, this battle is described in detail in the chronicle of the chancellor of the principality of Antioch, Gautier. It was written in 1122, the year following the event. Gautier even cites the speech of David, which he delivered before the battle began.

Gautier also reports that 200 European crusader knights took part in this battle, whom David had placed in the front ranks of the troops. The participation of European knights in the Didgori battle of the Georgians is not fortuitous.

David had had active relationship with the commanders of the crusaders before that too. As an old Latin chronicle reports, David IV often sent gifts to the King of Jerusalem crusader, Baldwin, and the existence of a powerful Christian state of Georgia was known throughout Europe, especially in France. It is known that David's cross was brought to Paris from Jerusalem with great honor, and it was kept in the old cathedral of the Holy Virgin in Paris for a long time. The reason of the Turks' unanimous warfare against



Georgia was that if they did not destroy Georgia, they would not be able to fight against the crusaders settled in Syria and Palestine. Gautier remarks that "Elghazi decided to launch an offensive against David IV in Iveria, for after he was destroyed he would begin subjugating Jerusalem and Antioch and exterminating Christians." But David IV frustrated this intention of the Turks and Arabs. He wholly exterminated this enormous coalition army of the Mohammedans on Didgori Valley on August 12, 1121.

David forced the enemy to fight this decisive battle in the most inconvenient place for them. Didgori Valley was situated on a high crest of the Trialeti Range and the enormous Turkish army was not able to spread and use all their force. In addition, the fight was conducted as David had planned. At the beginning, a small detachment of Georgians, which the Turks thought to be that of defectors because of its small size, boldly rushed into the ranks of the enemy and caused confusion among them from the very start. The attack of the main force of Georgians, led by David, was followed by the blow of the army headed by Prince Demetre from the rear, which finally broke the resistance of the Turks. Seized by panic, the enemy began fleeing from the battlefield. The Arab historian Ibn-Al-Assir describes the end of the battle like this, "The front ranks of the Moslems' detachments got confused. Those, standing behind them thought they were beaten and fled. The Moslems were running away as fast as they could and were in such a hurry to escape danger that they trod upon one another, and many of them were killed". The Armenian historian Matthew Urhaetsi writes, "That day a terrible slaughter of the Turks' army occurred, and rivers and mountain gorges filled with corpses and all the mountain slopes were covered." The Georgians took many captives, among them celebrated commanders and emirs. David's historian wrote enraptured that even peasants brought Arab kings, taken prisoner, as for other captured giants, it was not necessary to speak of them. Elghazi himself, wounded in the head and disgraced, returned to his country with about twenty horsemen. The Georgians followed the defeated enemy to the frontier of Ani and destroyed almost all of them.

The brilliant victory won at Didgori valley can be said to have been of a decisive importance for the further development of feudal Georgia. By destroying the Turks' coalition army Georgia got rid of a great danger that awaited her from the final domination of the nomad Turcomans. The domination of the Turk-Seljuks in Georgia and in Transcaucasia, in general, meant an essential change of the social-economic system of these countries and its degradation. Feudal relations in the Georgia of that period were at an advanced stage and developing progressively; as for the Turks, they were far behind Georgia and the Caucasian countries by the level of their development, by their economics, extensive nomadic economy and culture. Their domination would have caused the destruction of economics and degradation of intensive economy, the fall of the level of culture and would have impeded the development of society in conquered countries apart from massacre, plundering and destruction. World history knows quite a few cases when the conqueror with a low level of development had caused such a degradation of the highly developed countries that it became necessary to begin everything from the very beginning. It was the danger that had faced Georgia and its neighboring countries in the case of the victory of the Turk-Seljuks, who had a very low nomadic economic system.

Thus, Georgia, fighting against the Turk-Seljuks, was a representative of progress, opposing backwardness. The battle of Didgori saved not only Georgia, but also essentially



the whole Transcaucasia from the domination of the Turk-Seljuks' nomadic economy and their social and state systems.

The victory in the battle at Didgori, apart from this general progressive significance, had more concrete results of a political character. These results were of no less importance for the further development of Georgia and her neighboring countries. All the obstacles that hampered the final unification of Georgia were swept away after the victory at the Didgori Valley. As has already been mentioned, such important cities as Tbilisi and Dmanisi had not become part of Georgia yet. These cities managed to retain their independence with the support of the Turks and the Turks' coalition warfare had been arranged by the invitation of these cities. After the victory at Didgori, the way to Tbilisi was open for Georgia's victorious king, and indeed, after the defeat of the enemy's troops, their chasing and final destruction, David beleaguered Tbilisi, and liberated it in 1122.

Tbilisi had been separated from its mother country since the seventh decade of the eighth century, for four hundred years of the Arab rule, and in spite of the endeavors of quite a few political figures, it remained outside the Georgian statehood. David the Builder managed to occupy Tbilisi and to move the capital from Kutaisi to Tbilisi only after the victory at Didgori.

A few years later Dmanisi was taken as well. A complete victory over Turk-Seljuks and weakening their forces gave the king's power of Georgia great opportunities to wage warfare against conquerors on a larger scale outside the borders of Georgia as well. A liberation movement, begun in neighboring countries, assisted this. The neighboring Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples considered Georgia to be the force that would save and liberate them.

Before the battle at Didgori David the Builder had helped a great part of the population of Northern Azerbaijan-Shirvan in their movement against the Turk conquerors, and took into consideration the strategic significance of the eastern Transcaucasia in the fight against Turks' invasions. He carried out a number of measures to win this country over to his side. In 1105-1106 David married his elder daughter Tamar to ShirvanShah's heir Manuchehr, the son of Aphridun, as well as his other daughter Katai (Ekaterine) to the son of the Byzantine Emperor.¹

This step was also a political act, the result of a profound thinking. As David's historian remarks, David "sent the daughter of his, Kata, as a daughter-in-law of the King of Greeks. For he had sent the first-born daughter of his, Tamar, to be the Queen of Shirvan, to shine like two luminaries – one in the east and the other in the west, to divide the heavenly sphere by getting sun-like haloes from their father."

However, when such a step did not turn out to be sufficient and in the ruling circles of Shirvan, especially in the Mohammedan aristocracy Turkophile tendencies were still strong. David began a powerful offensive, and as it has already been said, in 1117 Georgian troops, commanded by Prince Demetre, waged war in Shirvan, and in 1120 the Georgians occupied the city of Qabala. At David's request, the ruler of Daruband started acting against Shirvan too. Shirvan-Shah Aphridun, being a pro-Turk-Seljuk ruler, was killed.

¹ David's daughter Katai was married to the younger son of Emperor Alexius Comnenus – Isaac. It is noteworthy that Isaac's elder brother John became emperor with the help of the Georgian bride's suite that had arrived in Constantinople. After this "The King of the Greeks was like a relative" for David.





David ceased fighting in Shirvan at once and put a new candidate on the throne of Shirvan who declared himself to be a vassal of Georgia.

Thus, Shirvan was under the influence of Georgia. The Turk-Seljuks would not put up with such a situation easily and it was one of the reasons for the Didgori battle too.

Having suffered a crushing defeat at the Didgori battle and having lost Georgia, the Turk-Seljuks tried to get back Shirvan. In November 1122, Sultan Mahmud marched into Tabriz, and in the spring of 1123, he invaded Shirvan, occupied its capital Shamakhi, captured Georgia's vassal Shirvan-Shah and threatened King David. David immediately started with his army to fight against this insolent Sultan. As soon as the Sultan heard about King David's coming with a large army, he shut himself in the city. And having suffered hunger and thirst for many days, sent gifts, and entreated for mercy; like a slave, being in need, he asked to be allowed to leave the city, with humility and not like a sultan." However, when David inflicted a crushing defeat on the Athabag of Ran who was coming to the rescue of the sultan, shut in the city of Shamakhi, the boasting sultan "fled the very same night, using the sewerage, and went to his country".

A month had not passed after this when David "again went to Shirvan, occupied Gulistan and annexed Shirvan", freed it from Turk-Seljuks and subjugated it to Georgia. Thus, the neighboring Shirvan (Northern Azerbaijan) was saved from the destructive domination of the Turk-Seljuks at that time. The favorable results of this event became noticeable very soon. The economics and culture of the Azerbaijan of that period began to flourish. Close contacts with Georgia had played an important part in this.

In the August of 1123, Ani, the main city of Armenia was liberated. The king of Georgia arrived there by invitation of the leaders of the Armenians' liberation movement. Moslems had occupied the city of Ani and its adjacent territories for over half a century. According to Matthew Urhaetsi, "The city of Ani was occupied by the Turks for sixty years". The population of Ani, oppressed by the domination of the conquerors, took advantage of the great defeat of the Turk-Seljuks and weakening of their power in Georgia, rose against the conquerors and turned to David the Builder, for help. King David came to liberate Ani with sixty thousand horsemen, but it became possible to occupy the city without fighting, for the insurgent population of Ani opened the gate of the city to the king of Georgians. According to the same Matthew Urhaetsi, "There was joy in the families of all the Armenians when they saw the city and its sacred places liberated from slavery." Apart from this, the king of Georgia "seized the following fortresses of Armenia: Gagi, Terunakal, Kavazini, Norbed, Mansagomi and Talinjakar".

Thus, a progressive process of unification and consolidation of the peoples of Transcaucasia under the leadership of Georgia began. Its aim was to raise these peoples to a higher level of social, economic and cultural development.

The achieved success significantly broadened Georgia's political frontiers and increased her international authority. According to the sources of those days, the kingdom of Georgia stretched "from Nicopsia (between present Sochi and Tuapse) to the borders of Daruband (Derbent) and from Ossetia to Aragatz (Armenia)".

The King of Georgia was called "King of Abkhazians, Georgians, Rans, Kakhetians and Armenians, Shirvan-Shah and Shah-in-Shah." It meant the following: King of Abkhazians, i.e. of Western Georgia, Georgians, i.e. of Kartli and Meskheta, Rans, i.e. of Hereti, Kakhetians, i.e. of Kakheti, Armenians or Lore's (Shirac) Armenian kingdom,



Shirvan-Shah, i.e. of Shirvan, Shah-in-Shah, i.e. the Supreme possessor of the Armenian kingdom of Ani. These titles show the successive growth of the Georgian king's power; at the same time his divine origin was emphasized and the right bestowed on him by God. For instance, David was called "the Sword of the Messiah". A coin minted by him has an Arabic legend "King of Kings David, the Sword of Messiah". He declared that God acted through him, and by cutting this legend in Arabic on his coin (this coin was in circulation in the market of the whole of the Near East) he told the Moslems in their own language that he was "the Sword of Messiah". By this he meant that he was the protector of Christians and that they should tremble with fear when seeing him or at the mention of his name. It has already been mentioned that the Bagrationis were called as follows: "Ilesian, Davidian-Solomonians" and this proved the divine origin of their family and the right to be kings. It must be noted that David rejected all the Byzantine titles that his ancestor kings had borne with such honor, and declared himself an autocrat. David's reign was a turning point in the history of the Georgian statehood. His standard, called *Davitiani* (David's) like Vakhtang Gorgasali's standard *Vakhtangiani* or *Gorgasliani*, turned into a symbol of Georgia's unity and might and was passed from generation to generation.

David's policy concerning the North Caucasian peoples must be specially noted. Georgia had exerted her cultural influence on the peoples living there by introducing and spreading Christianity among them from earlier times. The North Caucasian peoples were also interested in having economic and political relations with Georgia, which had a developed economy and was a powerful state. Traditionally the Georgian kings were in the habit of using the mercenary troops brought from the Northern Caucasus. Georgian culture, Georgian feudalism, Georgian Christianity spread in the Northern Caucasus. It is corroborated by the fact that one can still find churches with Georgian inscriptions, social terminology, etc. there. It was very important for David to strengthen and control the roads leading to the Northern Caucasus. Apart from fortifying the Jvari and Dariali passes, he paid great attention to other passes in the Caucasian range, especially to the road passing through Daruband (Derbent). He made its ruler his vassal. The North Caucasian princes were his vassals too. Thus, Georgia became a state that gathered and united the whole of the Caucasus. It had no match in political might among any other state in the Near East.

In King David's reign, special attention was paid to culture. Great cultural activities had been carried out in Georgian scientific centres for quite a long time, mainly the Georgian monasteries abroad (Chalcedon – on Mount Athos, near Antioch, in the Georgian churches and monasteries of the Black Mountain, and in Palestine in the Monasteries of St. Saba and of the Cross, in Petritsoni, etc.).

The scientific and cultural work was widespread on the territory of Georgia as well. Several highest scientific and cultural centers were founded (Gelati and Iqalto Academies, etc.). This also had a great political significance because at the time Georgia began a struggle for superiority in the Eastern Christian world. This superiority for Georgian progressive politicians meant not only political success; it was also the development of cultural traditions. Georgia's vocation was to be a worthy descendant of the best cultural creations of both Eastern and Western cultures. David the Builder's historian mentioned this while he described the foundation of Gelati, "It is another Jerusalem in the East, to



learn everything that is good, a teacher of scholars and scientists, another Athens... David gathered famous Georgian public figures there: theologian-philosophers, translator-commentators and philologists. The great Georgian philosopher Ioane (John) of Petritsoni, who had come from the Petritsi Monastery, worked there, as well as others

Georgian feudal society established close cultural contacts with neighboring countries, notwithstanding their religious beliefs. Such contacts were of positive significance for both sides, making both cultures richer and more diverse. The result of such contacts was mainly noticeable in literature. Secular fiction and poetry began to flourish in Georgia during this period. Eastern fiction and science spread gradually in Georgia based on cultural relations with neighboring peoples.

The court of the Georgian king protected cultural and literary public figures notwithstanding their nationality and religion. For instance, King David had a special palace built in Tbilisi for Moslem poets. King David himself was an exceptionally educated man. He had profound knowledge of Georgian Christian, or secular literary works and science, and the most important works of Eastern and ancient science and literature as well. He knew the Arabic and Persian languages very well. According to Arab historians, David was well versed in Islam and sometimes even argued with Moslem theologians on the questions of The Koran. David was also interested in astrology. However, he was most attracted to history. He had a splendid knowledge of the ancient historic literature and the world history. It is not only because of luck that the Georgian historic scholarship developed in Georgia in his reign. Its obvious proof is a splendid work of his anonymous historian *The Life of David, King of Kings*, and also the fact that it was in his times that the foundation was laid for the collection of historical works called *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (The History of Kartli). This later on became a manual and was passed from generation to generation as a "holy book".

The king's court acted prudently concerning the non-Georgian population. They were granted a number of privileges and did not feel worse here than in their own countries. Such attention toward the non-Georgian population and the privileges to their religion was part of an important policy. Georgia's mission at that time was to become a leading power in the progressive process of the development of her neighboring peoples. This shrewd policy made it possible to unite Caucasian peoples and to make their relations closer. To end this process it was essential to retain the existing historical conditions for a long time.

David the Builder's epoch laid a solid foundation for the further social and political development of feudal Georgia. King David himself had many more ideas and plans to realize, but he died unexpectedly on January 24, 1125 at the age of 52. He was buried at Gelati Monastery, which he had founded. Grateful descendants called him The Builder (*agmashenebeli*) as the builder of the new state of Georgia.

David's personality caused admiration in the following generations, in the first place, because of the state reforms he had carried out. He had boldly thrown away the old and outdated and implemented that was new and progressive. The departmental system of governing the state, introduced by him, was extremely progressive.

David had appointed *mosakargaveni*, i.e. rulers — officials who received their salary from the king's treasury — beside the *eristavis* and as their substitutes to rule separate provinces of the country. He implemented this practice widely, in the first place on the



territory turned into the king's domain. Governing the king's domain was to become the main cell that was to grow and embrace the whole country.

The king's domain had grown extremely in the reign of King David. He had bravely attacked half-independent princes – *eristavis* and lofty high-nobility and abolished the immunity of their estates. As for the recalcitrant ones, he confiscated their possessions and made them the property of the king. He carried out the same policy in the newly annexed countries – Armenia and Shirvan. Thus, an enormous fund of land became the possession of the king, which King David did not give out as an estate to be inherited. He gave it to his faithful subjects and persons who had distinguished themselves in the service of the country to govern (as an official). Such policy laid a foundation for the pre-bourgeois unification of the country. A new, the last stage, of feudal relationships was born in this way.

The situation was the same in Western Europe. There also, the strengthening of king's power and its becoming absolute was achieved by the restriction or termination of independent and half-independent seigniories, increasing the king's domain. There also, the central apparatus of officials gained ascendancy, creating a unified system of government. This process lasted for quite a long time and met with success, more or less. Georgia did not have the chance to complete this process due to a complication of her foreign political conditions.

Georgia in the Periods of David the Builder's Descendants Demetre I and Giorgi III

Hardships quickly arose in the reigns of David's descendants. The high nobility began a fierce struggle to return their lost rights and conditions. They fought, using all available means, to achieve their aim. David's descendants could not follow the course of home and foreign policy as successfully as David had and sometimes were compelled to draw back. However, the progress of the country was still evident. Demetre I (1125-1156) had to repulse the Turks' insistent attacks while facing complicated domestic affairs. He was compelled to make some concessions. Shirvan again seceded from Georgia and the local Shirvan-Shah began to rule over its eastern part. After this Shirvan became a subordinate vassal country of Georgia.

The Georgian king's court was also compelled to make a concession to the Mohammedan rulers of Ani, due to their attacks, and to return Ani to them on condition of its being a vassal city. There were some successes as well. For instance in 1138, Demetre seized the city of Ganja; as a sign of his victory he removed the iron gates of the city, brought them to Georgia and donated them to Gelati Monastery where they still remain today.

These failures of Georgia in the foreign political arena can be explained by the strained situation in the country at this period and the struggle against the feudal lords. At the end of his reign, Demetre was even forced to give up his throne to his rebellious son, David V (1155). David V ruled for a very short time (only six months). Demetre returned as king and raised his following son Giorgi to the throne together with him.



Demetre's heir, Giorgi III (1156-1184) fought against Georgia's internal and foreign enemies more vigorously. He recaptured the city of Ani and waged war against the ancient capital of Armenia, Dvin; he fought against Shirvan too (1167). He managed to restrict the wilful actions of the high nobility by strict measures. This of course, caused discontent of the latter. This discontent grew into a great insurrection in 1177 led by the commander-in-chief of Georgia — Ioane Orbeli. Ioane Orbeli wanted to make his son-in-law, the son of Giorgi's elder brother David, i.e. Prince Demna king of Georgia. King Giorgi suppressed the revolt and captured its leaders. He punished the participants of the revolt severely. Prince Demna was blinded and castrated. The pretender could not endure the torture and died. Ioane Orbeli was also blinded and his younger brother Kavtar Orbeli and his son Sumbat were put to death. Some of the guilty people were driven out from the country. The king's punishment was based on the decision made by his council (*Darbazi*) and was confirmed by the anathema of the Church. The king distributed the confiscated estates and posts to the people devoted to him. The king took a decisive step. He bravely promoted persons of low origin in the places of the high nobility. For instance, the former Quipchak Qubasar was given the post of the commander-in-chief, a former serf of an *aznauri*, Aphridon, became a chief steward (*msakhurtukhutsesi*), the former merchant Qutlu-Arslan was appointed treasurer, etc. The above-mentioned measures meant that the king's power tried to rely on new social strata instead of the high nobility and feudal lords. These were city dwellers and the *aznauri* — servants and persons of low origin. The high nobility were compelled to put up with these measures, at least for a time, but they would wait for a suitable moment to raise their heads and demand the restoration of their traditional rights and positions. In this critical situation, Giorgi III was compelled to make some concessions. At the request of the Church Council, he restored the taxation immunity of the church that he himself had abolished previously.

Giorgi III had a problem concerning the heir to the throne. He had no son and feared the defeated high nobility would take advantage of this fact and start a revolt. Therefore, he decided to raise his elder daughter Tamar to the throne and rule over the country jointly.

In 1178, Tamar was ceremonially crowned queen by her father. After this father and daughter reigned jointly for almost six years and in this time Tamar became accustomed to the complicated art of governing a country. A law against smuggling was adopted in this period, envisioning the strict punishment of the guilty persons. Giorgi III died on March 27, 1184.

The "Golden Age" of Georgia: Queen Tamar's Reign

Giorgi III's fear was justified. The noblemen did not wait long and as soon as he died tried to impose their will upon the young woman who remained alone on the throne of Georgia. First, they challenged the question of a woman's succession to the throne. The King's Council (*darbazi*) confirmed Tamar's right to be crowned queen after a long argument. They carried out this procedure with a special ceremony that emphasized that Tamar was getting her right to be queen from them, the high noblemen of Georgia, and not from "the Lord" as it had been established since the times of David the Builder and Giorgi III.



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1. The portrait of Ashot Kurapalates on Opiza Church (9th century).
2. The cross of David Kurapalates.
3. Coins, minted by David Kurapalates.



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1. Vardzia. The portraits of Tamar and Giorgi III.
2. Samtavisi Church (11th century).
3. The entrance to the Gelati Academy (12th century).
4. The bridge on the River Besleti (near Sukhumi) with an inscription in Georgian uncials.



The high nobility of Georgia agreed to have Tamar as Queen, hoping that they would be able to restore their lost rights while a woman sat on the throne. When the coronation and festivities were over, they categorically demanded that she dismiss people of low origin from the highest official posts and return these positions to the representatives of the high nobility.

Tamar was compelled to satisfy this request of the nobility. The queen's court was forced to make concessions to the reactionary feudal nobility. However, it did not mean that they would have a dominant position in the country. Such an aspiration to take hold of the reins of government was conditioned by the fact that they were afraid to lose their role in the country's political life. Their fear was not groundless, for progressive forces had become more and more active.

During that fierce struggle, a very noteworthy political movement was born connected with the name of Qutlu-Arslan, *metshurtsletukhutsesi* (finance minister) of Georgia.

Qutlu-Arslan presented the following demands to Queen Tamar: the queen was not to have the right of appointing or dismissing officials, and adopting laws. These rights were to be given to a special office, *karavi* (an institution like the parliament that appeared in Western Europe later on), whose members would decide the questions of appointing and dismissing persons, granting favors and punishing them, and then they would inform the Queen of their decisions and they would be carried out. Thus, according to these demands, the Queen would have only executive power, and all legislative power would be in the hands of the *karavi*. Qutlu-Arslan had quite a great number of supporters. His supporters were mainly the urban population and serving *aznauris*. There were also some members of the aristocracy who tried to obtain more rights for themselves in this struggle. Thus, a radical transformation of the political system of the feudal country was proposed.

Tamar ordered Qutlu-Arslan arrested, but this strict measure aggravated the situation. Supporters of the *karavi* took up arms and decided to attack the palace. Thus, the supporters of Qutlu-Arslan decided to achieve their aim by means of an armed attack.

Alerted to this danger, Queen's court sent two noblewomen, *Kravai* Jaqeli and Khvashak Tsokali to carry out negotiations with the conspirators. Generally, women mediators were particularly respected. This time too, these two women managed to calm the insurgents. The affair ended in mutual concessions and compromise. Tamar promised that she would not treat this vizier too severely. Apart from that, she would take into consideration their demands and would make a representative of the urban population member of the *darbazi*, the Queen's Council. Instead, the insurgents were to give up the idea of the armed struggle.

And indeed, after this we see that the Darbazi had considerably larger rights and Abul-Assan, the Tbilisi mayor or emir of emirs, a representative of the high stratum of the urban population was one of its chief members.

This was not the end of the inner political struggle. We have quite a lot of information about the uprising of the reactionary high nobility. They took advantage of every opportunity to rise against the Queen's power and make it weaker. The question of Tamar's first husband was conneted with the most important revolt.

The *darbazi*, after a long debate and consultations, chose the Russian Prince Giorgi, the son of Andrei Bogolyubski, Prince of Rostov-Suzdal, as Tamar's husband (The name Giorgi was given to him in Georgia. His real name was Yuri). It is noteworthy that the



new member of the *darbazi*, the emir of emirs, Abul-Assan, proposed his candidature and he took it upon himself to bring Yuri to Georgia.

From the point of view of the Georgian nobility, Prince Giorgi was quite a suitable husband for Tamar. On the one hand, he was an Orthodox Christian and on the other, he would not be able to carry out the interests of his country in Georgia because his uncle Vsevolod had driven him out of Rostov-Suzdal. Therefore, they did not wait long to bring Yuri to Georgia immediately and marry him to Tamar. This marriage did not turn out to be happy. The Russian prince revealed many negative features of character (drunkenness, obscene vocabulary, sodomy). Soon he and Tamar were divorced and he was sent to his country with proper honors. The Russian prince found shelter in Byzantium. In 1189, Tamar was married a second time to David Soslan, the son of the King of Ossetia, a descendant of the Bagrationis by his maternal line who was brought up at the Georgian King's Court.

The high nobility used this situation for a new insurrection. They rebelled again as if to protect the rights of the exiled Russian prince. The rebellion embraced a great part of Georgia, but the Queen's court managed to suppress it. The Prince Giorgi was captured and again driven out of Georgia; his supporters, rebellious *didaznauris*, were dismissed from their official posts and punished in different ways.

The above-mentioned events are the obvious proof of the fact that feudal Georgia of those days was again suffering from an internal political crisis. The contradictions between the outdated reactionary and new progressive forces had become extremely strained. It was not yet clear in whose favor the struggle would end. By the 1190s, the opponents reconciled in a compromise, but it was only a temporary reconciliation that was to turn into conflicts that were more serious.

Having brought about peace inside the country, Georgia started to carry out an active foreign policy.

In 1192, Tamar gave birth to a son who was given the name of Giorgi-Lasha. To celebrate the birth of the heir, a great attack was launched in the direction of Bardavi. Thirty thousand prisoners of war were set free in honor of Tamar and her son.

War was waged in other directions as well. The success of the Georgian army came from the fact that the enormous Turk-Seljuk Empire had disintegrated by that time into separate sultanates, emirates and athabags' domains, and Georgia could easily defeat these comparatively small political units. The Georgians subjugated almost all their neighboring Mohammedan rulers and made them vassals. Plans were made for fighting against more remote countries. Warned of this, the Turks decided to unite and wage war against Georgia. This alliance was headed by Abu-Bekr, the athabag of Adarbadagan (Azerbaijan) who gathered a significant part of the Turks' military forces under his standard. He turned for help to the spiritual head of the Moslem world—the Caliph of Bagdad. The Caliph of Bagdad supported the idea of this war. He gave them much money and his blessing too; he sent orders to Moslem rulers everywhere to take an active part in the war against Georgia, and even sent his caliph's standard as a sign of invincibility, which was to lead the "army of believers" in the fight against Christian Georgians.

The emir of Adarbadagan, Abu Bekr, invaded Transcaucasia with a large army. He intended to punish Shirvan's Shah Aqsartan, who was faithful to Georgia, first and then wage war against Georgia. Shirvan-Shah Aqsartan turned to Georgia for help.



The Royal *Darbazi* (council) of Georgia decided to start fighting against the enemy that was already near the frontiers of Georgia immediately. David Soslan led the Georgian army.

The fight took place at the town of Shamkhor on June 1, 1195. The Georgians inflicted a crushing defeat on the Turks. Abu-Bekr himself fled from the battlefield. The Georgian army took 12,000 prisoners of war and an enormous amount of booty. Among these was the standard that the Caliph had sent to the athabag as a token of invincibility. Shamkhor and Ganja both surrendered to the victorious Georgians.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, feudal Georgia reached the zenith of her political might. After the victory at Shamkhor Georgia's influence and authority in neighboring countries became greater. The Georgians attacked their neighboring Mohammedan domains and subjugated them one after another. The attention of the Georgian politicians was mainly turned to the incorporation of the neighboring Armenian lands and the final liberation of the Armenian people from Turkish domination. At the end of the twelfth century, the Georgians finally destroyed the Sheddadids' rule in Ani and incorporated this city and its environs into Georgia. The Turks were defeated in Guelakun and Amberd as well. Bijlisi was also taken and annexed in 1201. The Georgians moved the military operations more southward. They soon also liberated Armenia's old capital Dvin from the yoke of the Turks, and joined it to Georgia. The offensive against the Turks continued successfully in the southwestern direction. Georgia took back old Georgian territories of Oshki, Khakhuli, and Bana.

These Georgian successes greatly alarmed Turkish rulers and they decided to launch great coalition war against Georgia, headed by the Sultan of Rum or Iconia Rukn ad-Din (1196-1204).

The Sultanate of Rum was the largest Turkish state in Asia Minor. Rukn ad-Din's dream was to be the leader of all of the Turkish world. That was the reason he became head of the Mohammedan alliance in the fight against Georgia. According to the Mohammedan sources, an army of 400,000 marched under the standard of Rukn ad-Din. Rukn ad-Din was quite sure of his victory. Therefore, having stepped over the Georgian frontiers, he made his camp in Basiani, a southern province of Georgia and sent an envoy to Tamar from there, requesting her full surrender.

The Georgians took advantage of Rukn ad-Din's over-confidence. The Georgian army was quickly gathered and followed the envoy. Tamar herself saw the army to Vardzia.

Rukn ad-Din did not expect the Georgian army to appear so soon and had not even put guards around his camp. The Georgians' speedy attack caused panic among the Turks. The Georgian army was commanded by David Soslan, and their "leader was Zakaria Mkhargrdzeli, commander-in-chief, and two brothers – Shalva and Ivane Akhaltsikheli".

After a long and bloody battle, the enemy's enormous army was defeated.

The Georgians won a brilliant victory in the war at Basiani on July 27, 1202. The international influence of Georgia grew enormously. The news about her might spread throughout the world of those days. The Turkish states situated near and far from Georgia declared their wishes to be Georgia's vassals (e.g. the Sultanate of Erzinji and the Erzurum Emirate).

The most significant event among the successes of that period was the occupation of the fortress city of Kari (today's Kars). Kari was one of the Turkish strongholds in



Transcaucasia. It was of great significance for Georgia from the point of view of its strategic situation and trade and economics. Therefore, Queen Tamar sent a special army in 1204 to assist the *eristavis*, who were fighting to take this city. The Georgian army smashed the resistance of this city too. Taking into consideration the significance of this fact, Tamar did not give Kari away as a favor, as she had done in the case of Ani and Dvin, and subjected it to the royal court and appointed Ivane Akhaltsikheli, the hero of Basiani, its ruler.

The creation of a buffer state of Trabzon at the southwestern frontier of Georgia was doubtlessly another important political success of the Georgian Royal Court.

Georgia was bordered by Byzantium to the southwest, who claimed to be the leader of the Eastern Christian world. Georgia, rising in her development, had been considered the rival of Byzantium since David the Builder's times. By this period, Byzantium's might and general position had become very shaky: the Western European crusaders took advantage of the wars for the emperor's throne going on between dynasties and actively interfered in her internal affairs. On April 12, 1204, the crusaders took Byzantium's capital, Constantinople, by storm and plundered it terribly. After this, several independent states formed on the territory of the empire.

The Georgian politicians carried out corresponding steps in time. By Queen Tamar's order, the Georgian army occupied the former coastal provinces of Byzantium and the towns of Trabzon, Limnia, Samson, Kerasunt, Kotyora and Heraclea. This territory, called Chaneti or Lazistan, was mainly inhabited by Georgian tribes, and it is natural that it should have attracted the Georgian politicians' attention. Tamar established a separate state on the occupied territory and called it the Empire of Trebizond, and the emperor put on the throne was Tamar's relative, Alexius Comnenos, who was brought up at the Georgian Royal Court and was the legal heir of the Comnenos dynasty.

The above-mentioned measure had a far-reaching aim. As the well-known Russian Byzantinologist, Academician Kunin remarked, "The Comnenoses [Alexius and David] were still very young when they found themselves in Georgia where they grew up. Their mother tongue was Georgian . . . They were under the influence of the Georgian life and the Georgian view points everywhere, thus, they looked more like Georgian noblemen than the Byzantines." Moreover, Academician Uspenski emphasized the fact that the Trebizond Empire was characterized by "The ethnographic diversity of the population and the peculiarities of history in which Hellenism (i.e. Greek influence) did not play a dominating part." He remarked that "We cannot help bringing forward and accentuating specially the conditions that at the beginning of the thirteenth century and after establishing the Trebizond Empire, almost for a whole century point to the domination of the local Lazi tendencies, strengthened from Tbilisi and supported by the spirit of the Trebizond kings themselves".

In addition, indeed, the Trebizond Empire, established by Georgia and having mostly a Georgian speaking population was closely connected with the Georgian monarchy, and if the Georgian politicians assisted the independent existence of this state and did not incorporate it in Georgia it must have been, first of all, due to the great political shrewdness.

Georgian politicians wanted to show the world that the Byzantine Empire, destroyed by the Latins, continued to exist in the form of the Trebizond Empire. This empire had a legitimate dynasty at its head that had survived the emperor's court and that Georgia protected the head of the Orthodox Christian Church. Actually, this state, inheritor of



Byzantium, was mostly under the influence of Georgia. The Trebizond Empire, founded by Georgia, occupied quite a significant place in the world history and was Georgia's trustworthy ally during two and a half centuries of its existence.

In 1206, Tamar's husband David Soslan died and Tamar made her son Lasha-Giorgi king to rule over the country together with her. Georgia continued to carry out an active foreign policy. The Georgian army arranged a victorious campaign in Iran, subjugating a great part of Iranian territory and occupying the town of Merend, Tebriz, Miana, Zenjan, Kazvin. The Georgians reached Rom-Gur itself.

Thus, in the last period of Tamar's reign, Georgia's vassals were the Sultan of Erzink, the Emir of Erzurum, the atabeg of Ganja, Shirvan-Shah, the Prince of Daruband (Derbent) and other quite a few of Mohammedan rulers.

Georgia dominated almost the entire Transcaucasia as well. The spread of Georgian influence in the mountain regions of Ciscaucasia (Northern Caucasus) was an event of a progressive significance for the peoples inhabiting it. Georgia introduced a culture of a higher level and assisted the formation of more stable cultural-economic relations between the Caucasian peoples. Georgian feudal culture, the Georgian written language, Christianity were spread more intensively among the population of the mountainous regions of the Northern Caucasus, for instance, among the Ossets, Circassians and other tribes. This was not done by force or by compulsion; it took into consideration the interests of the progressive development of those peoples with the support and wish of the local advanced circles.

Tamar's policy concerning non-Georgian countries and their population was distinguished by great shrewdness and fairness. Her contemporary historian accentuates this.

Tamar's personality played a great part in working out and carrying out such a policy. Georgian and foreign sources of those days express great admiration while characterizing her.

Queen Tamar was a person of distinguished characteristics. She had a strong will and was tolerant, and while solving problems she was always calm and prudent. She always tried to find a compromise with her adversaries and to persuade them with peaceful negotiations. She did not establish order in the country only by force and severity. She took such steps only in extreme cases. In the opinion of her contemporaries, Queen Tamar was a softhearted and gentle person, merciful and seldom angry, an opponent of violence and of appropriating things by force. However unbelievable it may seem, it is a fact that in the medieval world, characterized by severity and cruelty where state power was based on the severe punishment and suppression of the population with fear, she was against such severity and even the capital punishment. During the long period of her reign, she never gave an order to inflict a corporal punishment on anybody or even to whip anybody; on the contrary, she took advantage of her supreme power and tried to make punishment lighter. For instance, when a criminal, according to the law in force in Georgia, was to be put to death or blinded, or one of his limbs was to be amputated, the queen's permission was necessary for the punishment to be administered. Queen Tamar made use of this right, she did not confirm the decision of the court and in this way actually, she annulled all punishments of this kind. "The pardoned" criminals were punished comparatively lightly.



Queen Tamar was an extremely devout Orthodox Christian. She prayed a great deal. Prayers and rites were always performed in the church of the Royal Court, as the regulations of the church demanded. Following her example, all the courtiers and all those living in the palace, never missed the divine service. It should be noted that Tamar did not only pray, she paid great attention to charity; she gave alms and distributed charity with the money earned by her own work. When free from state affairs, the Queen always did some work. A chronicler informs us that Tamar clothed twelve priests with shirts that she knitted herself. The chronicler also notes that Tamar paid for the food she ate with the money she earned.

Four frescos showing Tamar's beauty still exist today. Here we want to present the words of the father of the new Georgian historiography, Academician Ivane Javakhishvili: "Everybody knows that nature adorned great Queen Tamar with wonderful loveliness and that she was the best, incomparable representative of the Georgian well-known beauty. Great Tamar's name was an object of admiration in her time and for her descendants as well, because supernal forces combined a woman's charm, loveliness and manly valor in her, the wisdom of a statesman and innocent, gracious heart that was never enraged. The fact that history made a gentle and tender creature, the loveliest woman, queen at the time when Georgia's military might was at its height, who abolished capital punishment in Georgia and stamped out mutilating penalty of criminals, is extremely noteworthy!"

Tamar became known far and wide for her generosity and graciousness. Tamar's praise reached the countries, situated beyond the seas, apart from Georgia's neighboring countries. Western European sailors spread her fame as well: a chronicler writes, "The French and the Greeks, sailors on seas, when the sea was calm said Tamar's praise!"

Tamar did not live long after she had raised her son to the throne to rule over the country jointly. Georgian and foreign authors present different dates of Tamar's demise. Therefore, the opinions of researchers on this question differ. Some of them think that she died in 1207; others think that she died in 1210, and still others think that it happened in 1213. Tamar was buried in the Gelati Monastery. The Georgian Church declared her a saint.

The Reign of Giorgi IV (Lasha)

After the death of his famous mother, the very young King Giorgi-Lasha began to rule over the country quite independently. Soon serious complications arose both in the internal and foreign arena. Giorgi-Lasha's reign began with a conflict with the nobility who occupied high official positions at his mother's court. This conflict became more serious later on. The reason for this conflict, on the one hand, was the efforts of the nobility to preserve their indivisible influence at the King's court, and on the other, Lasha-Giorgi's aspiration to get rid of their influence and to turn his power into unrestricted autocracy. His aim was to restore David the Builder and Giorgi III's strong course that would assist the country's development. The high nobility did not yield their positions in ruling the state and in the internal life of the country. They fought against the young king with all available means. They did not let him act independently and even interfered in his private life. For instance, they did not allow him to marry the woman of a low origin,



whom he loved with all his heart. Lasha-Giorgi had a son by her, who was called David, but the noblemen did not recognize him as the King's legitimate son. Lasha remained true to his love and did not marry anybody else.

Lasha-Giorgi tried to send these extremely powerful noblemen away from the court and promote people holding the same views as he and were of his age. This naturally caused discontent among the high nobility.

Complications in foreign affairs added to the strained internal situation. Vassal countries began to leave Georgia, but the young King took decisive measures and subjugated them again. Georgia still seemed to be a powerful country and its authority was quite high in the world arena. At this time, Lasha received an epistle from the Roman Pope Honorius III asking him to take part in the fight to liberate Palestine. The European crusaders' fights to free the Christians' sacred places from the Mohammedans' domination were still going on, but the fifth crusade (1217-1221) against Egypt ended without any result. The crusaders hoped that they would achieve success with the help of the Georgians. A rumor spread among the crusaders that the King of Georgia had already begun this war. This was written in a letter of the French knight G. de Bois, sent to the Archbishop of Bezancon.

Lasha-Giorgi seems to have begun preparations to help the crusaders, but at this very time, Tatar-Mongols appeared on the frontiers of Georgia who not only frustrated the plans for this war, but also completely changed Georgia's further development.

The Social-Economic Situation in Georgia in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

Georgia's feudal state was steadily making progress from the close of the tenth century until the beginning of the thirteenth century. Georgia successfully repulsed the attacks of Byzantium and Turk-Seljuks, the country was united politically and became the leading power in the whole of the Caucasus. The foundation and result of all this was the social-economic and cultural development.

The country's economy was making progress. There were achievements in agriculture. The proofs of these are big irrigation canals dug in Tirifoni Valley, in the region of Ruis-Urbnisi, Mukhrani, Samgori, in Inner Kakheti and in the regions beyond it. The canal of Inner Kakheti (the Alazani Canal) was 119 kilometers long and irrigated 53,000 hectares of land. The Samgori Canal was 20 kilometers long. The intensification of economy gave larger crops, vine-growing became more productive, the same can be said about fruit-growing, cotton and rice growing. The production of flax, api-culture, cattle breeding developed. There was a great number of sheep, pigs, and cattle in Georgia. Georgia was especially famous for the best breed of horses that were widely exported abroad.

Artisanship in Georgia became well developed during this time. The king and great feudal lords (churches and monasteries, high nobility) had artisan serfs at their courts, but a great number of them were found in towns. They made their produce mainly for markets. These were as follows: potters, glassblowers, artisans producing articles made of glass, armor-makers, shoemakers, makers of bows and arrows, stirrup and saddle-makers, carpenters, stone-masons, bricklayers, ore prospectors, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, weavers, painters, makers of parchments, copiers of books, artists, doers of gold-needlework, etc.



The artisans' produce was of a high artistic level. It is the proof of the artisans' skill, passed from generation to generation, and the competition, existing among them and the well-developed taste of their customers. It can be supposed that the artisans were united in small companies.

The development of agriculture and handicraftsmanship naturally resulted in the increase of trade. Trade and barter were carried out inside the country, among separate provinces, and with foreign countries. Merchants' associations were formed. They conducted great caravan trade with Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Khvarazm, India, Byzantium, Russia, the country of Quipchaks and other more remote countries. They imported valuable fabrics, dishes, armor, clothes, fur, precious stones and pearls, ointments, spices, etc. They exported: silk, wine, nuts, cotton, the artefacts of craftsmanship, horses, honey and wax, mercury, and even oil.

The number of cities grew very fast in Georgia from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. On the one hand, it was a natural result of the development of artisanship and trade, and on the other, of uniting Transcaucasia under the leadership of Georgia. It caused the inclusion of many artisanship and trading centres into its borders, for instance, Ani, Dvin, Kari of Armenia, Ganja, Barda, Bailakan, Shemahia, Qabala, Daruband of Shirvan, and many other comparatively small towns.

The feudal aristocracy paid special attention to towns and took a great interest in them. They tried to get hold of and maintain towns with great incomes. The income of towns, the service of merchants and artisans little by little became very important to the feudal economy. The royal power also tried to take possession of towns. The population of towns (the burghers' strata) had the significance of a political support in the struggle against the disobedience of the high nobility and for maintaining the unity of the country.

By the beginning of the thirteenth century, Georgia had reached the highest stage of feudalism, and before it she had passed the first stage of the developed feudalism when principalities and seigniories were formed according to the hierarchical-vassalage system, with tax and juridical immunity. A great part of the eighth and ninth centuries, *saeristavos* were such principalities and seigniories and they remind us of similar institutions in Western Europe. The restriction and disappearance of these large and small principality-seigniories started in the eleventh century. It was an inevitable process accompanying the formation of Georgia's united feudal monarchy and the strengthening of the king's centralized power.

The political unification of Georgia was a natural result of the general economic and social development of the budding feudal state. The formation of a stable centralized state in all feudal countries is quite a long process. In Georgia, this process also went on slowly and with variable success as was the case in other countries. The main obstacle on this road was the strength of large feudal seigniories.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the king's central power in Georgia fought for the restriction and final abolition of the seigniorial rights of the most powerful feudal lords. The king attacked princes-seigniors, and they defended themselves to protect their economic and political freedom and the immunity of the rights gained long ago through uprisings and revolts. In spite of the fact that the king's power had achieved some success, this process was not concluded. Thus, it is clear that the situation inside the country was still critical. The measures taken by David the Builder and Giorgi III, aiming at restricting the rights of the high nobility and at changing the political system of the state and promoting



progressive forces, assisted this process successfully. However, this process was significantly hindered in the period of the political crisis that occurred at the beginning of Queen Tamar's reign when the high nobility managed to exert their influence on the royal court. From this time the practice of giving out lands, official positions and countries to rule with the right to pass them from generation to generation became stronger.

Gradually great *ersitavt-eristavis* again appeared in the country, possessing entire countries. This strengthened *eristavt-eristavni* again began fighting to become princes and kings, but they were opposed by average and petty *aznauris* (*mosakargaveni*), people of low origin and inhabitants of towns who represented progressive forces. The high nobility were unable to become kings of their domains due to the significant factor of the country's flourishing economy, besides it each province was closely connected with another. The struggle between progressive (unifying, centralist) and regressive (decentralist) forces was going on successfully, and it was obvious that the progressive forces would ultimately win. Unfortunately, a backward foreign force actively interfered in this critical situation of the country and radically changed the rising social-economic and political development.

The great majority of the population of Georgia were peasant serfs. They were the main producers of material wealth. The partially free stratum of low origin (*mdabioris*) had almost wholly disappeared. The latter were petty owners of land, having retained personal freedom, but who had their "masters", "protectors" (the king, churches and monasteries, a great or a petty *aznauri*) for whom they did their military service. Gradually this military service became more and more difficult to do, for it needed quite a lot of money and time. The necessary equipment for the military service was very expensive and it became harder for the *mdabioris* to obtain. At the same time it was very difficult for the population who worked on the land to take part in wars, the more so as the development of arms required regular military training and exercise. This took a lot of time, and it affected the condition of the men working on the land. Only a very small part of the *mdabioris* managed to combine these two duties. They were quite well to do, they achieved higher position; they used other people's work in their households and became *aznauris*. But a great majority of the *mdabioris* did not do their duty properly, got into debt, asked their "masters" for material help and in the long run, either became peasant serfs, or took to robbery, and in the extreme situation began begging or became tramps. It is noteworthy that the number of both bandits and beggars grew, causing the state great problems. The royal court adopted a very strict law against bandits – those found guilty of this crime would be sentenced to hanging. A great number of beggars were a matter of special concern. The state passed a law that the tenth part of the state income should be distributed among the beggars. These measures were not sufficient and the severe reality of life drove the greatest part of the *mdabioris* – men-at-arms into the ranks of peasant serfs.

Thus a great social process was mainly finished in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Part of the producers of material wealth, those working on the land, joined the ranks of peasant serfs. The land on which the peasant worked was the property of a feudal lord and the peasant owned it and had the right of passing it to his children and grandchildren. For this, he paid a tax to his master. The peasant was tied to the land in the same way as the land to the peasant, i.e. the peasant did not have the right to leave the land (*pudze*),



and the master did not have the right to drive the peasant away from the land, to sell him without the land or give him away in some other way. The Georgian feudalism, i.e. the relations between the master and the peasant who paid a tax, had a progressive character for it was the land that was taxed and if the land yielded more crops, the tax was not increased. This was a stimulus for the peasant to enhance his earnings. The peasant was also allowed to do what he liked on the land allotted to him. This fact also assisted to make his economy more intensive and made his relations with the market closer.

Peasants, by their origin, or the character of the relations with their master, were divided into numerous categories. Peasants differed from one another by their economic conditions. This was the result of the amount of the land they lived and worked on. The plots of land on which peasants lived and worked were of different sizes. This was a natural result of the multiplying of the peasants' households, or a skilful management of economy.

Conditions of the population of mountainous regions should be discussed separately. According to their social development, this population was more backward than that of the plains. They were still free from the feudal yoke. The communal relations were preserved, but the more the feudal relations developed in the plains, the more the mountain population was influenced by them, and these relations were spread in the mountainous regions too. The free population of the mountains fought against it, but the feudal state of Georgia suppressed their resistance with strict measures. For instance, a great revolt took place in the mountainous regions of eastern Georgia in the last years of Queen Tamar's reign and it was quelled only after three months of fierce fighting.

The feudal class consisted of the king or queen's family and noblemen of various ranks. Great changes took place in the social and political situation of the upper stratum of the high nobility – the princes in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The unification of Georgia was going on by abolition of separate kingdoms and principalities, and other half-independent seignories, or by restricting their political rights. The power of separate kings (for instance, that of the Egrisi-Abkhazian king, the king of Georgians, the king of Rans and Kakhetians, the king of Lore-Tashir) was united in the power of one king – "the king of all Georgia, and the descendants of old royal families filled up the ranks of Georgia's highest aristocracy, at the best. Also, the old half – independent princes (*eristavt-eristavis*, *eristavis*, and so on who had made themselves princes) who had escaped the Georgian king's destructive hand were compelled to put up with reality and changed their orientation. Now they were not fighting for retaining independent domains, they were trying to obtain privileges and high positions at the king's court.

A great majority of the feudal class consisted of petty and average *aznauris*. Their considerable part was king's vassals, and part of them was considered the vassals of various masters. Their main duty was military service. The *aznauris* were divided into two groups; those who had fortresses and those who did not. Having a fortress was a great social and political priority. Some of the *aznauris* occupied economic-administrative positions. Their serving the master was not defined only by economic relations; it was also defined by centuries-old traditions and feudal customs.

In Georgia, as it was the case in Europe, the institute of knighthood was established. The etiquette and the rights and duties of knights were worked out. The term knight itself, as it was in France, first had the meaning of a mounted man – at-arms. The terms



chabuki, *qma*, or *moqme* — a young man, a knight — were used in the eleventh and twelfth century Georgia to denote the concept of knight.

Knighthood seems to have appeared in the period of the formation of principedom — seigniories in Georgia, but it reached its zenith in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The average and petty feudal lords — knight-*aznauris* tried to be in the service of the king. The king's policy itself assisted it. For instance, feudal lords' large masses seem to have been grouped around Bagrat III, who was the first to begin uniting Georgia. And it is they who form a well-trained and numerous knightly armies with whose help king Bagrat achieves great success both in the home and foreign arena. David the Builder paid a great attention to the formation of an army consisting of knights. He himself trained and supervised them, raising their discipline and fighting spirit.

Knighthood was at its height in the reign of Giorgi III and Queen Tamar, in the second half of the twelfth century. The successful wars of this period are doubtlessly the result of the good organization of the knights' army.

The increase of the number of towns and population caused the increase of their economic and political significance. The population of Georgian towns mainly consisted of merchants and handicraftsmen. There is no doubt that the population was not homogeneous. They were both socially free people and the serfs of feudal lords.

The upper privileged stratum of merchants consisted of large merchants. Judges and other high rank officials were appointed from them. Merchants' certain organizational unit was headed by a *vachartukhutsesi* (head of merchants). Large merchants played an important part in governing the town and the country's political life. Kings tried to have good relations with them. Besides, the state treasury had good income from big merchants, they fulfilled important state commissions, for instance, they brought news from foreign countries, fulfilled certain diplomatic commissions, etc.

Less well-to-do merchants made up a considerable part of the urban population. The majority of them were serfs of the king, big and small *aznauris* or the church. Part of them managed to free themselves.

The same can be said about the artisans living in towns. Some of them were free and others were serfs of feudal lords. They made their produce both to order and for the market. There is a hypothesis that the artisans of separate fields were united in corporations which were headed by elders (*ukhutsesebi*).

The town population had their way of life. Sometimes views different from feudal ideology and mentality were spread among them. For instance, a sufistic-mystic trend of knighthood spread in Tbilisi at the beginning of the eighth century. It opposed official orthodox religions. Even one king of Georgia — Lasha-Giorgi — was a follower of this belief.

"The poor of the town" were a certain part of the town population: beggars, and various other elements. Their increase in number caused considerable problems to the king's power.



The State System in Georgia in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

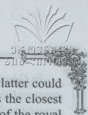
In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as well as at the beginning of the thirteenth century, a system of government formed as Georgia unified and became a powerful state. A king whose rights were unrestricted by law headed it. Theoretically, he governed the country "by God's will"; his title was officially "King of Abkhazs, Georgians, Rans, Kakhétians and Armenians, Shirvan-Shah and Shah-in-Shah and the ruler of the whole East and West". We spoke about it while discussing the state rule of David the Builder, here we will repeat the same and add that the order of enumerating the countries in this title repeats the historic succession of their incorporation in one state. Sometimes, in foreign sources (Persian, Arabian, Russian) the kingdom of Georgia is referred to as simply Abkhazia according to the name of the country, unification of which started in the late eighth century. The same name was preserved in the united Georgia much time of David the Builder's reign. Being a ruler of the East and West means being the first in the eastern Christian world, the Georgian Royal Court had a claim on it, opposing Byzantium, and considering the kingdom of Georgia to be its rival. Besides officially emphasizing the theory that the Bagrationi family was the descendant of Iese, David and Solomon, historians contemporary to Giorgi III and his eulogists not only asserted that he had been sent to his subjects by the Lord himself as the king resembling him, but they called his daughter "the equal to the Lord" in official documents, like Byzantine emperors did.

In spite of such theoretical norms, the high nobility considerably restricted the power of kings in Georgia. While David the Builder's and Giorgi III's power had been almost absolute, Tamar was compelled to make some concessions and restrict her power in a way in favor of the high nobility. The Queen decided all important questions only together with the *darbazi*.

The *darbazi* had a special significance in the feudal monarchy of Georgia. It consisted of the *darbaiselni* that included viziers and officials, subordinated to them, rulers of principalities (*eristavt-eristavni*), and the clericals of high rank. The *darbazi* was held as a deliberative body, presided over by the Queen. Certain etiquette was strictly observed, hierarchy. Part of the Council members (*darbaiselni*) was allowed to sit, others were not, and were left to stand. The viziers sat in gold-chased armchairs, some with cushions, others without; some with coverlets, others without. This was outward expression of the hierarchical system of officials.

The royal court governed the country with the assistance of viziers. A vizier stood at the head of a separate branch of the government. All the viziers formed the viziers' council, presided over by the person closest to the queen and the first among the viziers — *mtsignobart-ukhutsesi-chqondideli* — about whose origin and meaning we have already spoken above. A *mtsignobart-ukhutsesi* (chancellor) stood at the head of the queen's chancellery (*samtsignobro*), consisting of twenty-six *mtsignobaries* (secretaries).

These, as a rule, were monks. The *mtsignobart-ukhutsesi* himself was to be a monk too, therefore his position, unlike that of other viziers, was not connected with landownership. He did not have heirs and was not interested in maintaining his position by inheritance. Therefore, *mtsignobart-ukhutsesi* was the most faithful servant of the Queen and his power depended on the Queen.



State affairs were not solved without the *mtsignobart-ukhutsesi*, but the latter could not take any decisions independently without the Queen's consent. He was the closest counsellor of the Queen, the chief justice and the manager of the property of the royal army and the queen's personal property. As we have mentioned above, he stood at the head of the supreme body of the court – *saajo kari* (the court of appeals) that heard the cases, coming from different parts of the country and from different strata of the population. This official of the highest rank who was a bishop at the same time (of Chqondidi, Bedia-Alaverdi, etc.) was concerned with church affairs as well. Thus, the highest secular and clerical power was in the hands of the *mtsignobart-ukhutsesi-chqondideli*.

The next vizier was *amir-spasalari* (chief of the war department). He was the minister of defence in modern terminology and managed the questions of warfare. When the king did not take part in a war, the *amirspasalari*'s duty was to lead and command the army. He would plan battles and guarantee the readiness of the army in peaceful times by training and registering soldiers.

Mandaturt-ukhutsesi was the official managing order inside the country, royal receptions, and ceremonies. The position of the *mechurchlet-ukhutsesi* equaled that of the minister of finances. He was the manager of the royal exchequer. Old royal cities were his subordinates too.

The local governing of the country, providing men-at arms for the army and other functions were performed by *ersitavi-eristavni*, *khevistavni* (rulers of the population in the mountain gorges), and *tsikhistavni* (heads of fortresses). *Saeristavos* and *Saeristavi-eristavos* were not the principalities of the old character in the twelfth century. They were provinces, ruled by state officials. There were the following *Saeristavi-eristavo* in Western Georgia: 1. of Svans (*ersitavi* – Baram, the son of Vardan), 2. of Racha-Takveri (Kakhaber, the son of Kakhaber), 3. of Tskhumi (Othago Sharvashidze), 4. of Odishi (Bediani), 5. of Argyveti (Amanelisdze); in Eastern Georgia: 1. of Kartli (*eristavi*-Rati Surameli), 2. of Kakheti (Bakur, the son of Dzagan), 3. of Hereti (Asat, the son of Grigol), 4. of Samtskhe (Botso Jaqeli). There were also the *saersitavos*, situated in the frontier zones. The duty of the *eristavis* of these *saeristavos* was mainly the military reconnaissance of neighboring countries. A suitable military force was at the disposal of such *saeristavos*. This force defended them from small raids of the enemy. There were about six or seven of such bordering *saeristavos* in Georgia at the end of the twelfth century to defend the country from the Turk conquerors.

Georgian Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

The eleventh and twelfth centuries were a flourishing period for Georgian culture alongside prosperity and strengthening of the Georgian statehood and social-economic development. It is the natural result of the development of Georgian culture during the previous period, the more so as it did not have such favorable conditions for normal development either before or after. Almost all the branches of Georgian culture, especially its science and scholarship, reached the zeniths of their development in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.



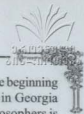
In Georgia, scholarship and science had an importance equal to state policy. Such a great political leader as David the Builder paid special attention to the development of science and scholarship and founded important scientific centers in Georgia. He founded the Gelati and Iqalto Academies, gathering famous Georgian scholars and scientists, working in Georgia and abroad and created extremely favorable conditions for work there. Gelati Academy was supervised by a teacher of teachers (*modzgvart-modzgvari*) greatly honored in the whole of Georgia and at the royal court. For instance, the king met the *modzgvart-modzgvari* with greater honors at receptions than even the catholicos or chqondideli. Such well known-philosophers as Ioane Petritsi, Arsen of Iqalto, Ioane Taritchisdze and others worked at the Gelati and Iqalto Academies.

Aside from the scientific and scholarly centers of Georgia great work was done in Georgian monasteries outside of Georgia in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. These were the following: the Iverian monastery founded on Mount Athos as early as the tenth century. There Ioane, Euthymius and Giorgi the Athonites worked. This monastery was also called the Academy of Athos; the Black Mountain Monastery, not far from Antioch, in Syria. There a great scholar, philologist and philosopher Ephrem Mtsire worked; the Monastery of the Cross in Palestine, near Jerusalem, built by Prokhor the Georgian in the 1040s and 1050s. It soon became not only the most important center of scholarly and literary work, but it also presented the achievements of Georgian culture in the international arena. After the European Crusaders occupied Jerusalem, founding a Jerusalem kingdom, there (1099-1187) the Latins appropriated the majority of Orthodox Christian churches, but they left the Monastery of the Cross to the Georgians. In 1187, after the Moslems had conquered Jerusalem, Queen Tamar sent a special envoy to guarantee the immunity of the Georgian cloisters.

The Petritsoni Georgian Monastery played an especially important role in the development of Georgian culture. It was built in 1083 by a famous Byzantine military and political figure "the great Domesticos of the West", a Georgian representative of the high nobility — Grigol, the son of Bakuriani. It was situated near the town of Phillipopolis (today's Plovdiv) and was intended only for Georgians. The Georgian philosopher Ioane Petritsi worked there for twenty years. He is known to have been the follower of the well-known Byzantine philosophers — Michael Pselos and John Italos. Besides, very many future Georgian scholars received their education in the Mangan Academy in Constantinople and other higher educational institutions.

Perfect knowledge of Greek enabled Georgian scholars to master the heritage of Hellenic culture. The peculiarity of the Georgian culture of this period, compared to the Western culture of the same period, is that Georgia, as the country situated on the borders of the East and West, had the chance to get acquainted and master the Arabian and Persian cultures and enriching her own literature and art.

Many translations were done in Georgia in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Georgian scholars and writers aimed at translating into Georgian all the scholarly theological and Christological literature and also fiction written in Greek and the languages of the East. Not only was hagiographic literature translated into Georgian, the works of the Greek philosophers of the ancient and Christian periods were translated too. As for Eastern literature, mainly secular works were translated.



Georgian historiography particularly developed in the eleventh, twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries. Philosophy also became of particular importance in Georgia during this period. The interest of the Georgian society in philosophy and philosophers is proven by the fact that we come across the names of well-known philosophers not only in philosophical works, but in literary and historical works as well. The works of Plato, Aristotle, Plotini, Procle, Pseudo-Dionysius or as it is supposed the same Petre Iberi, Nemesios of Emessa, Hermias, John the Damascene, Anastasia of Sinai, Michael Pselos, and others were translated. The originals of some of these works have been lost and only the Georgian translations have been preserved.

Humanistic ideas were widely spread in the Georgian society of this period. The country's general economic, political, cultural and ideological development was the reason for it. Secular culture was well developed as well. One of the main ideas of humanism is the acknowledgment of the reality of this world. It implies the overcoming of the dualism of the earth and heavens, characteristic of the Middle Ages. Ioane Petritsi theoretically corroborates this idea in his works. This problem is solved in his philosophic ideas based on Neoplatonism. While the areopagitic teaching whose author, as it was supposed, was Petre Iberi (fifth century), and which was the Christian re-make of Neoplatonism, gave birth to an interest in antique philosophy; Ioane Petritsi's (eleventh and twelfth centuries) philosophic ideology is based on the teachings of Procle (410-485), the last great philosopher who systematized Neoplatonism. One of the main philosophic works of Ioane Petritsi is *Commentary on the Philosophy of Procle, Diadokhos and Plato*. He is also the translator of the works of Aristotle, Nemesios of Emessa, Amonias Hermias and others into Georgian. Ioane Petritsi's translation of Procle's *Theological Relations* is considered the oldest known translation of Procle's works in the world.

Alongside Neoplatonism, there was another trend in the Georgian philosophy of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It developed the principles of monotheism and dogmatism. The representative of this movement is Arsen of Iqalto. His main work is a compendium *Dogmatica* whose main aim was to defend the orthodox (Chalcedonic) movement. The compendium also contained polemic works against the Mohammedan and Hebrew religions, and various heretical trends of Christianity as well.

The great Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli continued the progressive trend of the Georgian philosophic thought of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. His poem *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, along with its high poetic merits, contains interesting philosophic ideas. It reveals a great influence of Neoplatonism, specifically Areopagitic teaching and Ioane Petritsi's philosophy. Its main idea is humanism. In fact, it is a synthesis of Georgian ideological, cultural and philosophic development. Humanism and Neoplatonism unite in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and confirm each other. Ideological turning from the heavenly world to reality and man finds its philosophic substantiation in Rustaveli's work. It is justly thought that Shota Rustaveli's poem is the crown of Georgian poetic and philosophic thinking and creative work of those days.

The Knight in the Panther's Skin describes the reality of the political life in the twelfth century Georgia: a woman becomes a queen while her father, the king, was still alive. Her father himself raised her to the throne. The same thing happened in Georgia when King Giorgi III declared Tamar to be queen, reigning together with him. The poem clearly describes Georgia's social and political system. It also vividly depicts the institution of knighthood, the position of women, the system of suzerain and vassal, and other aspects



of Georgian culture of the time. Its incomparable prosody and musicality, its progressive social and political thinking, the patriotism and the friendship of different peoples, alongside the above-mentioned humanistic ideas, places it among the world's poetic and philosophic masterpieces. What is more, Rustaveli, a thinker of genius, a great creator was far ahead his time and the society that gave birth to him. He appears to be a harbinger of the early renaissance.

Rustaveli is not alone in this epoch. There are several poets of high rank beside him: Chakhrukhadze and Shavteli. Feelings of patriotism permeated their creative work of poetry and philosophy. The well-known scholar Niko Marr, who had studied the works of these poets, emphasized that it was not false partisan patriotism. The whole of the epoch when the above-mentioned poets lived was the epoch of a highly developed Georgian national statehood and military fame, and it expressed the disposition of its contemporary progressive Georgian society.

Georgian literature, apart from brilliant poetic monuments, is represented by a remarkable prose work in this epoch. It is *Amiran-Darejaniani* by Mose Khoneli. It is a long romance, consisting of separate short stories telling about the heroic deeds of knights and their adventures.

Not only scholarly or theological works were intensively translated in the eleventh and twelfth century Georgia, but fiction as well. For instance, a Persian romance written in verse called *Visramiani* was translated into Georgian in the twelfth century. In spite of the fact that the Georgian translation is in prose, by its artistic merits it is as good as the Persian original.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries were a great epoch for the development of Georgian architecture and fine arts. A great number of splendid works of secular and church architecture, mural painting, adornments of manuscripts, miniatures, sculptures of gold, decorative sculpture were created during that period.

The most important and greatest churches were built in Georgia in the eleventh century. They, with their splendor, were well suited to the process of Georgia's unification. These are: the Church of Bagrat in Kutaisi, the Catholicate Cathedral Svetitskhoveli in Mtskheta, the Alaverdi Cathedral in Kakheti and the Church of Samtavisi in Kartli. We must also mention the Samtavro Cathedral in Mtskheta, the Church of Nikortsminda in Racha, Savane, Koreti in Imereti and many others. All these are the eleventh century monuments. In addition, in the twelfth century the magnificent Church of Gelati with its beautiful frescos and mosaics was built. Both the frescos and the mosaic are masterpieces of creative work.

At the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century, churches of a comparatively small size were built. Unlike the cathedrals, they were built far from inhabited centers, often in the depths of wooded gorges. Feudal lords who took monastic vows and preferred to live far from the troubled life of this world built them. These are the churches of Ikorta, Betania, Kvatakhevi and Pitareti. Georgian church architecture reaches the greatest heights of development at the beginning of the thirteenth century, but later on, this development was hampered by complications in the political situation and a period of degradation set in.



Several monastery complexes, carved in rocks, were created in the eleventh and twelfth century Georgia – David Gareji, Vahani, and Vardzia. Of the secular monuments of those days, the ruins of the Geguti Palace near Kutaisi, have been preserved.

Festive receptions for honorary guests took place in this palace. According to sources, various historical compositions were painted on the walls of the palace. Only small remnants of the larger and more important palaces have survived and it is impossible to restore them to their initial form. In the same period, many magnificent strongholds and city-fortresses were built, but only their ruins remain.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries were the period of the development of fine arts. The facade sculpture is at the highest point of development. Churches are decorated with magnificent relief sculptures and ornaments, whole scenes from the Gospel and historical life are depicted on iconostases. The art of making sculptures from gold also reached the highest level of development. The articles used in church, crosses and icons were covered with skilfully executed compositions and figures, rich ornaments. For instance, Khakhuli icon from Gelati is a remarkable specimen of a medieval goldsmith's work. The virtuoso goldsmiths of this period were Beka and Beshken Opizaris. The art of enamel was also highly developed in this period. Georgian art of enamel and monumental art reveal Byzantine influence; however, they also have their original character.

The frescos are distinguished by their monumental character, correct proportions, strong and expressive faces, remarkable matching of colors. Besides the usual religious themes and the pictures of saints, frescos present portraits of historical persons. For instance, four portraits of Queen Tamar have survived. Giorgi III and Lasha-Giorgi are painted beside her too. David the Builder's portrait has been preserved in Gelati, restored later on and painted again. Signs of deep humanity and lyricism can be seen in the paintings of those days. The miniatures of Georgian manuscripts are also very refined and of a very high quality.

Based on the above-mentioned, a point of view has been established in Georgian scholarship that "The eleventh, twelfth centuries' Georgian art is characterized by a number of features that became a foundation for the period of renaissance in Europe several centuries later".

Thus, all sides of feudal life in Georgia reached unprecedented efflorescence from the eleventh until the beginning of the thirteenth century, therefore the Georgian people called this epoch "the Golden Age" of their nation's historic development.

The Period of Mongol Domination

The first Appearance of Mongols and Jelal-ed-Din's Invasion

Mongols. The historic development of Georgia changed sharply from the 20-s of the 13th century. The reason for it was worsening of Georgia's foreign political situation, caused by the Mongol invasion.

The Mongols were the tribes at the lowest patriarchal stage, leading a nomadic life in the vast valleys of Central Asia.



Their way of life and culture were extremely primitive; they did not have either towns or villages, they did not cultivate land, they were illiterate; their religion was also extremely primitive, they practised shamanism.

The Mongol tribes were united by Temuchin, elected the highest ruler by Qurultai, the assembly of Mongol leaders; Temuchin was called Genghis-Khan. Genghis-Khan established strict discipline among his subjects and formed a well-organized military force. He combined the traditions of the tribal system with the new organization of the army. If anybody fled from the battlefield or was taken prisoner, the whole squad was put to death. This was the reason that made the Mongols fight faithfully and bravely in all situations. Herewith, they acted relentlessly, and ruthlessly slaughtered everybody who resisted them; they razed towns and villages to the ground; turned thriving territories with cultured economy to deserts. They horrified their adversaries with their ruthlessness.

The Mongols first attacked the Chinese Empire and destroyed it easily. They took Peking in 1215. Then Genghis-Khan turned westward and defeated the strongest state in Central Asia- Khvarazmian Kingdom. The shah of Khvarazmia-Muhammad fled to Iran, the ruler of Mongols sent his two well-known commanders, Jebe and Subudai, after him with 30000 mounted men-at-arms. At the same time, he charged them with reconnoitering western countries. This reconnoitering army invaded Georgia in 1220 first. The Georgian army, headed by Lasha-Giorgi, was defeated several times in the fight against them, but the Mongols did not try to conquer Georgia at that time. They raided Georgia's provinces, situated near her eastern borders, Shirvan, Daruband and moved to Ciscaucasia. There they defeated the united army of Russians and Quipchacks (the battle on the River Kalka, in 1223) and moving round the Caspian Sea from the North, returned to their ruler in Central Asia.

In 1223, in January, Lasha-Giorgi died. He seems to have died of the wound he had got in the battle against Mongols. He had not left a legitimate wife, therefore his sister Rusudan was raised to the throne (1223-1245). The high nobility became still more influential at the royal court in the reign of Rusudan, and the queen's centralist power became much weaker. The negative results of this fact were soon visible in both the fights against Jelal-ed-Din and the Mongol army that came to conquer Georgia.

The Invasion of Jelal-ed-Din. The heir of Muhammad, the Shah of Khvarazmia, Jelal-ed-Din escaped the Mongols and began to assemble an army against them in Iran. Jelal was a good commander, but a bad politician. He made an imprudent step when he decided to conquer Georgia and started rallying Moslem forces against her. The Georgian Royal Court and military commanders did not act shrewdly either. Nothing was done in order that the invasion of Jelal-ed Din should be evaded. On the contrary, when the enemy's army crossed the frontiers of Georgia the Georgians had not even finished mobilizing military forces.

A decisive battle took place at the town of Garni in August 1225. The commander-in-chief of the Georgian army, Ivane Athabag left the battlefield, being defeated. The next year Jelal-ed-Din managed to occupy Tbilisi too, some Mohammedan inhabitants having turned out to be traitors.

The city was seized by the Khvarazmians who started slaughtering and raiding the civilian population. They killed relentlessly everybody-old and young, man or woman. According to the chronicler's information, Jelal-ed-Din ordered to pull down the dome of



the Sioni Church and put his throne there from where they watched the ravaging and devastating of the city. They threw the icons of Jesus Christ and the Holy Virgin at the bridge on the river Mtkvari and forced the Cristian population to tread on them. Those who did not obey them were beheaded and thrown into the Mtkvari. Very many inhabitants of Tbilisi chose to die as martyrs than do such a sacrilegious act. Over 100 000 inhabitants were massacred in Tbilisi that day.

Jelal ed-Din got hold of innumerable wealth in Tbilisi. As his historian, An-Nesev, says, mountains of parchments were not enough to compile the lists, describing this wealth.

The occupation of Tbilisi did not mean conquering Georgia. The Georgians put up a strong resistance to the raiding army of the enemy. In spite of the fact that the Royal Court of Georgia and the commander-in-chief revealed signs of confusion, the Khvarazmians were not able to seize the main strongholds of Georgia. Jelal-ed-Din was unable to win the final victory and subjugate the country. His raids in Georgia lasted five years and the country was greatly damaged. Finally, he was informed that the Mongol army had crossed the river Amu Darya and was moving towards Adarbadagan. Jelal-ed-Din was compelled to leave Georgia. All his allies had abandoned him, and finally, he died somewhere in Kurdistan.

Mongol Conquest of Georgia

Georgia had hardly managed to heal the wounds inflicted on her when the Mongols, coming with the purpose of conquering the country, appeared at her frontiers. The Mongols had conquered almost the whole of Iran in a comparatively short time and invaded Transcaucasia in 1235. They occupied the cities of Ganja, Shamkhor, Gardabani. In this critical situation there was no united leadership. No general plan of fighting. Having heard of the Mongols' invasion in Georgia, Queen Rusudan went to Western Georgia. The Mongols acted against Georgia not only by military force. There was dissension among the feudal lords of high rank. Fights among them for lands had reached their peak. The Mongol commanders took advantage of the favorable political situation inside the country they were going to conquer. On the one hand, the fierce fight for lands among the Georgian feudal lords, and on the other-strained relations between the Queen and the high nobility greatly assisted the conquerors to achieve their aims. The Mongols occupied the cities of Lore, Dmanisi, Samshvilde, Ani one after another. After this the road to Tbilisi was open to them, but they found Tbilisi deserted and burnt. Such had been the order of Queen Rusudan. So they occupied the capital of Georgia without fighting.

A great part of Georgian noblemen, among them the Amirspasalar (commander-in-chief) of Georgia, Avag Mkhargrdzeli, surrendered to Mongols without fighting and began to collaborate with them. The main thing is that in spite of treachery the Georgian people put up an implacable resistance against the invaders and hindered their getting foothold in the country. The Mongols massacred the Georgian patriots. According to the chronicler's information, "The whole country was terribly devastated: it was raided, captives were taken, men had been slaughtered before women and children were taken captive." The prince of Samtskhe, Qvarqvare Jaqeli, did not surrender to the enemy and stopped fighting only after he had permission from Queen Rusudan to do it. Having occupied Samtskhe,



the Mongols tried to invade Western Georgia, but they were unable to do it. Fighting went on in Georgia.

Rusudan who was in Western Georgia at the time, tried to get in touch with Europe. She sent a special letter to the Roman Pope and asked for the auxiliary forces of European countries. She had a moral right for such a request, for some time before it was Europe and the Roman Pope who had asked Georgia to take part in liberating Jerusalem. As we have mentioned above, Lasha-Giorgi was going to satisfy this request, but the first appearance of Mongols wrecked this plan. At that time Georgia, a Christian country, though of a different, orthodox belief, found it very hard to fight against heathen Mongols. The Georgian Queen promised to embrace Catholic faith and recognize the supremacy of the Roman Pope if Georgia received help from Europe. In his answer to her appeal sent in 1240, the Roman Pope Gregory IX pointed to his own troubles and weakness and regretted that he was not in a position to give aid to Georgia.

Having lost all hope of receiving help from Europe, the only thing left to Georgians was the knowledge that the Mongols would have a great fight with the Seljuk State of Rum whose Sultan Kias-ed-Din was Rusudan's son-in-law, but the Mongols defeated the army of Rum as well and the Georgian Royal Court was compelled to ask for peace.

One of the main terms of the peace treaty was maintaining Georgia's unity and the Queen's power. Rusudan was especially interested in having her son David acknowledged as her heir. The Mongols agreed to these terms. Georgia was to pay annual tribute of 50000 gold pieces, and also provide an army at the Mongol's request. Georgia lost all her vassal countries except Armenia. It was also decided that the Mongols' army and Mongol authorities would be stationed in Georgia, she being a conquered country. As for Western Georgia, the Mongols' army would not enter it. According to the agreement, Rusudan's son David was sent to the Khan's camp to be confirmed as Rusudan's successor on the throne. Nothing was known about him in Georgia for a long time. So many misfortunes shattered Rusudan's health and she died in 1245.

The First Period of Mongol Domination in Georgia

After Rusudan had died and before a new king was confirmed, the Mongols, as was their rule, divided Georgia into *dumens*¹, districts to be ruled.

It is true that they placed Georgian feudal lords at the head of these *dumens*, but it was still obvious that due to this the Georgian statehood and the Georgian feudal system faced the danger of extinction. The Georgian high nobility understood this danger soon and began to get ready for an uprising. True, the uprising did not take place, but the Mongols were compelled to make certain concessions. They set free captured noblemen and thought it reasonable to restore the power of the local king. Having no information about Rusudan's son David they agreed to send a new candidate to the Khan's Horde. This new candidate to take the position of the king was Lasha-Giorgi's illegitimate son David whom Rusudan had sent to her son-in-law, the Sultan of Rum, and he was kept at the Sultan's court as a captive. Giorgi's son David was brought to Georgia and he was also sent to the Horde to be confirmed as king.

¹Dumen is a Mongol word, meaning 10000.



Having arrived at Karakoram David, the son of Giorgi, and his suite found David, the son of Rusudan, alive. They had thought him dead. Rusudan's son David had not been confirmed king because a new great Khan had not been elected in 1241 yet after the death of Ugadei. In 1246 Qurultai elected Genghis Khan's grandson Guiuch (1246-1248) great Khan, the latter, as was the Mongols' custom, made Giorgi's son David the elder, king of Georgia, and Rusudan's son David, the younger one was subordinated to him. Rusudan's son David was called Narin (Narin means handsome). The political unity of Georgia was obviously in danger due to the fact that two kings had been confirmed on the throne. The results were that soon Georgia was divided into two kingdoms.

Having returned to Georgia, the two Davids both sat in Tbilisi and ruled over the country together. Of course, after their return the division of the country into duments was abolished, but the rule of two kings created an abnormal situation. Part of the high nobility grouped round Giorgi's son David, the other part round David Narin. The latter could not reconcile with the decision of the Mongols who had subordinated him to his "illegitimate" cousin. Besides, Rusudan's son David greatly suffered because he saw his country in such a situation. It had been the most prosperous and powerful country in Nearer Asia quite recently and he considered himself to be its legitimate king. He seems to have been preparing clandestinely for an uprising against the Mongols. The Mongols suspected him of doing it and arrested him, but he managed to escape and went to Western Georgia. The Mongols did not dare to invade Western Georgia this time either. Thus, Western Georgia separated from the United Georgia and an independent state was formed there with David Narin at its head (1249).

Mongols' Census of Georgia and the Mongol Taxation System. Giorgi's son David Rebellion

In 1245-1256, the Mongols took general census of the whole state. The aim of this census was to find out how many fighting men they could have from this or that country and to determine the sum total of taxes. The census was conducted in the part of Georgia where the Mongols ruled. The country was to supply the Mongols with 90000 men-at-arms, 9 full families of peasants were to send one warrior. This makes us conclude that about 5 or 6 million people must have lived in the Georgia of those days. Based on the data of the census all the branches of economy, giving some income, were taxed. The amount of the tax on agricultural produce (mali) was determined by the crops. The peasant also paid for the pasture (qapcher) if he had cattle. It was his duty to provide the warrior with all the necessary equipment (qalan), to lay roads, to take care of the roads, and to provide special stations with horses, to provide the Mongol fighting men and officials with food and many other things. The Mongols also established a tax on trade (damga). This heavy taxation became more unbearable for peasants because of the disorderly collection of taxes. The illiterate Mongols trusted time-servers with collecting the taxes. The latter took advantage of this and robbed the population as much as they could. Of course, the taxes to be paid to the local feudal lords remained intact; some of them even became heavier. The masters tried to enlarge their lessened incomes by means of enlarging the taxes.



Thus, the double exploitation made the position of the peasant unbearable and working on the land and having his own economy became quite senseless. Therefore, he ran away, left the ancestral abode and found shelter in comparatively remote places. In this way, the peasant who had been a producer stopped being one, and this threatened the country economics with complete destruction.

After Genghis Khan's death the unified Mongol Empire gradually disintegrated into a number of small khanates. The Il-Khans' Mongol State was formed to the south of Georgia, on the territory of Iran. The first khan of this state was Hulagu, the grandson of Genghis Khan. Georgia was directly subordinated to this Khanate. Hulagu-Khan continued his aggressive wars and the Georgians were forced to take part in them. Of course, it resulted in many casualties and material damage. Hulagu levied new taxes on conquered countries. This increased discontent against him.

In 1250, Giorgi's son David refused to be a subordinate to Mongols. The Mongols sent a numerous army to fight against him. The insurgents commanded by Sargis Jaqeli defeated the Mongols' detachment in the first battle. But, while fighting with the main army, the Georgians were defeated. However, the Mongols' casualties were so numerous that they did not dare to continue fighting without reinforcement.

In 1261, the Mongols' Noyon Argun invaded Samtskhe with a new army. David Ulu and Sargis Jaqeli understood that their staying in Samtskhe to continue fighting was hopeless, therefore they decided to go to Western Georgia.

Giorgi's son David and his supporters were convinced that their chances of victory were very insignificant and tried to become reconciled with the Mongols. The political situation permitted it.

Beginning with the sixties the relations between the Northern Mongol State of the Golden Horde* and the Il-Khans' Iran became strained.

Georgia was situated between them, therefore it was very important for both parties whose side the Georgian king would take. This was the reason Hulagu Khan forgave Giorgi's son David for having rebelled against the Mongols and allowed him to be the king of Eastern Georgia again.

The war between the Golden Horde and the Il-Khans began in 1262. Georgia and its adjacent territory became the arena of these battles. It, of course, did these countries irreparable harm. For instance, in 1265 the troops of the Mongols of the Golden Horde devastated the territory lying between the rivers Iori and Mtkvari. These places turned into deserts after that. The Il-Khans built fortified trenches (siba) beside the Darubandi Pass. The Georgians were to defend it together with the Mongols. Epidemics often broke out in the camps of the Mongols. These epidemics spread in Georgia too and very many people died of them.

In 1265, a disagreement arose between King David and his devoted vassal – Sargis Jaqeli. This disagreement was artificially kindled by the Il-Khans. It ended in taking Samtskhe away from Georgia by the Khan and turning it into the vassal-country of the latter. This fact caused a further disintegration of Georgia. David died in 1270.

* The Golden Horde was the name of the Mongols' Khanate that was established on the territories of Russia and Eastern Europe



Demetre II, Selfless

Fight against the Mongols at the End of the 13th and the Beginning of the 14th Centuries

The Mongols raised David's 11 year-old son Demetre II (1270-1289) to the throne and made Sadun Mankaberdeli, a person trusted by the Khan, his guardian.

Sadun was a typical time-server. He had once been a vassal-aznauri of the Mkhargrdzelis, but by means of his slyness and flattery of the Mongols he became an athabag. Demetre being under age, this time-server factually governed the country and greatly increased his personal wealth. His rise in position and indecent behavior caused indignation among the progressive circles of Georgians. This was the reason that Demetre did not make Sadun's son Qutlu-Bugha athabag after his death, and this was the cause that Sadun's heir became his deadly enemy.

Demetre II ruled only in the eastern part of Georgia. David Narin was king of Western Georgia and he was not a subordinate of the Mongols. As for Samtskhe, as we have already mentioned, it was separated from Georgia and was directly subordinated to the Khan. Thus, only Kartli and Kakheti and part of Armenia were subordinated to Demetre.

The young king did his best to improve the country's bad economic situation and ease the Mongols' oppression of the Georgians.

With this purpose Demetre tried to maintain good relations with the Khan. The King with the Georgian army took part in Mongols' endless wars which mostly ended in defeat and took the lives of thousands of Georgians.

Beginning with the 80-s of the 13th century internal dissensions raged in the Il-Khans' State and Georgia was involuntarily involved in them. Several conspiracies were arranged against the Khans, followed by repressions and slaughtering one another. Demetre had good relations with the first vizier of Argun Khan-Bugha, but in 1288 Bugha was accused of organizing a conspiracy against the Khan and he was put to death. King Demetre was asked to present himself at the Khan's court. There Qutlu-Bugha, Sadun's wicked son, who bore a grudge against Demetre, plotted against him. Thus, Demetre's fate at the Khan's court was decided - he was to be executed. If he did not go there, Georgia would be ravaged. Demetre decided to sacrifice himself and save his country from the coming disaster. As the chronicler informs us the Council advised him to find refuge in Mtiuleti (the mountain part of Georgia), but the King of Georgia did not agree to do it and appeared before the Mongols' Khan of his own free will. On March 12, 1289, the Mongols executed Demetre. His grateful descendants named him selfless, for having given his life for his country.

By the end of the 13th century, the Mongol State, based on military violence, begins to fall into decay. The Mongols tried to improve the situation by carrying out reforms and putting the taxation in order, they even changed their faith and declared Islam a state religion, but all this did not help them, for the situation in the country was becoming worse and worse. David VIII, Demetre's son took advantage of such a state of affairs and organized a rebellion that lasted many years. The Khan took various measures to subdue David VIII. He sometimes promised him peace through negotiations, at other times he tried to win the nobility over to his side, but the Mongols did not achieve their aim, for the



common people steadily supported the King. It is true that the country was not fully freed from the Mongol domination at that time, but the selfless fight of the rebels against the foreign forces, considerably weakened their rule in Georgia.

Georgia's Liberation from the Mongols' Domination Giorgi the Brilliant

The Mongols' many-year-long domination had very bad consequences for the country. During the whole period of their domination, the fight against them had gone on almost ceaselessly. These fights against the conquerors had been followed by repressions, the devastation of the country and a massacre of the population. Thousands of the Georgian people had been killed in the incessant wars of the Mongols in which the Georgian population had been forced to take part. The country had also been devastated in the wars between the Golden Horde and the Il-Khans. Thousands of the inhabitants of Georgia had died of the epidemics brought by the Mongols. Thus, the population of Georgia had significantly diminished by the end of the Mongols' domination, the villages and towns had been devastated, complicated irrigation buildings had broken down, the cultural-economic centers had been destroyed.

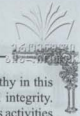
The political power of the Georgian king became extremely weak. The Mongols had not allowed the king to punish or dismiss unruly *eristavis* or other high-rank officials. This had helped the high nobility to be free in their actions. The Georgian state system was disorganized.

The united state of Georgia did not exist any more. After the rebellion of David Narin Western Georgia was declared to be an independent state. Samtskhe also became an independent unit, subordinated to the Khan and at the end of the 13th century, the Mongols, to punish the rebellious King David VIII, raised his brothers Vakhtang (1297) and Giorgi (1299) to the throne. Thus, there were simultaneously three kings in Eastern Georgia. There was a separate king in Western Georgia and a separate ruler in Samtskhe.

The relations between the population of mountains and plains became aggravated. The mountain population of Trans and Ciscaucasia which earlier had been subordinated to the power of a powerful king of Georgia, began to show signs of recalcitrance, encouraged by the Mongols. The mountain people slaughtered or drove away the King's officials and the servants of the church. Finally, they started an attack and began to settle down in the plains devastated by the Mongols. For instance, Alan-Ossets began to come down from Ciscaucasia and began to settle down in Inner Kartli, in Ksani and Liakhvi Gorges. They even occupied the town of Gori.

The Georgian culture also deteriorated. The development of scholarship and science ceased. The customs of uncivilized Mongols took roots among Georgians. Thus, the Mongol rule greatly hampered the normal development of feudal Georgia in almost all the spheres of social life.

In spite of the weakening of the Mongol Khanate at the beginning of the 14th century, it still had enough power to subjugate Georgia. Georgian politicians changed their method of fighting against Mongols and made up a new plan of liberating the country.



The activities of Giorgi V, Demetre's son (1299/1318-1346), are noteworthy in this respect. In the first place, it was necessary to restore the country's political integrity. King Giorgi tried to use the Mongols themselves for this purpose, and began his activities by serving them faithfully. The Tatars, tired of rebellions in Kartli, appreciated his loyalty greatly. The Georgian military forces were very important for the unification and strengthening of Georgia. Giorgi V made friends with the Tatar noblemen in the Horde, especially the first emir, Choban Noyon, who was a factual ruler while the Khan was under age. Owing to this, the King obtained considerable privileges for his country. Now the King himself supervised collecting the tribute, and not an official of the Horde. At the same time, King Giorgi received a permission from the Khan's Court to unite different parts of Georgia into one kingdom (1318); King Giorgi, by his shrewd actions, easily incorporated Western Georgia; he also subordinated Samtskhe, where the grandfathers and uncles on his mother's side were princes. He also subordinated other princes and aristocrats and stamped out their recalcitrance by strict measures. This was the reason for his being called "Brtskinvale"- "the Brilliant".

Giorgi the Brilliant tried to consolidate feudal order in Georgia's mountainous regions and drive away the aliens that had settled down there. He took the town of Gori after three years of fighting and drove the Alan-Ossets away from Ksani and Liakhvi Gorges. He restored the ownership of the Georgian feudal lords there. Giorgi V made up a special law code ("Dzeglisdeba") for the population of the mountainous regions of Georgia.

Having united and consolidated the country, Giorgi the Brilliant began to restore the political system of feudal Georgia. He reinstated the government system that had been in force before the Mongol invasion. "Khelmtsipis Karis Garigeba" ("The Organization of the Royal Court"), compiled in his time, has reached our days. The rights and duties of the officials of the Royal Court and the rules of conducting various ceremonies are defined in it. "A Criminal Code" ("Tsigni Samartlisa Katsta Shetsodebisa Qoveltave") was made up by the Prince of Samtskhe-Beka, and was in force throughout Georgia. Later on Beka's grandson Agbugha, that is why it is known as Beka-Agbugha Law, filled up this law code.

The King's government did their best to better the situation in the country's economics; they assisted the development of agriculture, trade and handicraftsmanship, and put the life in towns in order.

The Mongol rule gradually weakened in Georgia in the reign of Giorgi V, and in the 30s of the 14th century it was already over. When the Khan had Choban Noyon assassinated internal feudal wars broke out in the Il-Khans' State. King Giorgi took advantage of this situation and drove the Mongols' 10000 men army out of Georgia.

Giorgi the Brilliant achieved great success in foreign policy as well. He established contacts with the states adversary to the Il-khans, the Golden Horde and the Sultanate of Egypt. These states, on their part, were interested in maintaining good relations with Georgia. That was the reason that the Sultan of Egypt granted a number of privileges to the Georgian merchants and pilgrims that arrived there; he returned to the Georgians the churches and monasteries seized by the Mohammedans.

Giorgi the Brilliant restored Georgia's influence on the Trebizond Empire, and took an active position concerning Byzantium as well. Georgia established intensive relations with the Italian city-states-Venice and Genoa.



In the 20-s and 30-s of the 14th century a noteworthy correspondence was carried out between king Giorgi V and the Roman Pope John XXII, and in 1329 the Pope moved the Smyrna (Izmir) Catholic Episcopacy to Tbilisi. In 1330, he wrote: "We elevate Tbilisi, the great place of the Kingdom of Georgia, to the rank of the Episcopal city... And we wish it to be called" the Episcopal city of Tbilisi" eternally." The Roman Pope appointed John the Florentine Bishop of the Catholics in Tbilisi, at the same time he appointed Peter Guerald bishop of Sukhumi. In 1332, 1333 Giorgi V established relations with Philip VI, Valois, King of France whom he informed that he was ready to send 30 000 men-at-arms to fight in Syria-Palestine to liberate "the holy lands" together with him. In the same period, Giorgi V received the envoys of the King of France-Ricardo Mercher (Mercier) and Alexander the English with great honor. Getting rid of the Mongol domination had a vital effect on the social and economic development of Georgia. The population was liberated from the Mongols' violence, heavy tribute and various compulsory labor or military taxes and obligations. This assisted the restoration of the destroyed economy, the development of intensive branches (gardening and vine-growing, cultivating of land by means of irrigation, etc.). Trade and craftsmanship revived. Many towns were restored. Tbilisi began to specially thrive. The European sources of those days call it "a most remarkable, populous, skilful and rich city".

Important social changes for the better take place at that time as well. King Giorgi did away with the unruliness of great feudal lords, but it was already impossible to put the country on the road of development in the direction of prebourgeois transformation that had been stopped by the Mongols' invasions. The progressive forces (the urban population, the aznauris in the service of the country, the free population, working on the land) who were to have the leading role in these processes, were degraded. The feudal class of the aznauris was divided into layers, according to their ranks. The most powerful among them – the high nobility-still strove to turn their domains into half independent feudal possessions (princdoms, principalities), and did their best to subordinate king's aznauris and peasants. The peasantry, too, was under the heavy yoke of serfdom. True, they were liberated from the taxes and obligations before the Mongol conquerors, but the feudal lords made them pay part of them in their own favor. It was necessary to have a long peaceful period of development to get back the prosperity of the country, but, unfortunately, there was no stable peace, separate Mongol rulers still made incursions into our country and at the end of the 14th century, a new terrible enemy invaded Georgia, turning its fate backward.

Tamerlane's Invasions of Georgia and Their Consequences

At the end of the 14th century, great disaster befell Georgia. The invasions of one of the strongest and cruelest conquerors in the world- Tamerlane's invasions began. The descendant of Central Asian Mongols – Timur, again united the nomadic Mongols' hordes, made up the most powerful army and made up his mind to restore Genghis Khan's destroyed empire.

The tyrant conqueror invaded Georgia eight times and tried to subjugate or to destroy the country with his savage energy.



Tamerlane or Timur Leng first invaded Georgia in 1386. After fierce battles, he occupied the capital of Georgia on November 21, 1386. Here he took prisoner King Bagrat himself and his family. Having plundered the city, Timur left Georgia and took Bagrat with him.

Encamped in Karabagh* Tamerlane forced Bagrat to embrace Islam and promise to spread Islam in Georgia as well.

The conqueror sent Bagrat back to Georgia, accompanied by 12000 Mongol men-at-arms. But King Bagrat did not intend to give up his national faith and independence so easily. He clandestinely entered into agreement with his sons and they destroyed the whole of the army that entered Georgia. The Georgians put up a fierce resistance to the enemy that invaded Georgia a second time in the spring of 1387, and did them great harm. True, the Georgians were defeated in the battlefield, but the enemy was unable to conquer Georgia at that time, and also Timur was informed that Azerbaijan had been invaded by Tuqtamish. Greatly damaged, Tamerlane was compelled to leave Georgia.

Tamerlane had been engaged in fighting in Iran and Azerbaijan until 1394, the situation was aggravated in Central Asia as well, war against Tuqtamish was still going on. Tamerlane defeated all his adversaries and started for Georgia again. He met with a staunch resistance of King Giorgi VII (1393-1407). It was very difficult for the enemy to fight in the narrow Aragvi Gorge, besides, the population was fortified in inaccessible fortresses and high mountains. In spite of some achievements, Tamerlane did not succeed in catching hold of the Dariali Pass.

Meanwhile Tuqtamish-Khan moved to Transcaucasia via the Derbent Pass. Tamerlane left Aragvi Gorge and set out to fight against him. In 1395 Tamerlane followed Tuqtamish-Khan who had turned back and inflicted a crushing defeat on him on the bank of the Terek. Victorious Tamerlane returned to Central Asia and got ready for the war against India. As for King Giorgi, he began to attack the troops left by Tamerlane in Georgia and Azerbaijan, defeated them and drove them away.

Having returned from India, Tamerlane with all his army started for Georgia. He invaded it five times in 1399-1403 and tried to subjugate or to destroy the country finally with savage methods of fighting. His hordes ravaged almost all the provinces of Georgia-Heret-Kakheti, Trialeti, Lower and Inner Kartli, Imereti.

They mercilessly massacred the population of Georgia everywhere, made the people adopt Islam, and took them prisoner. They destroyed churches and monasteries, palaces, villages and towns, irrigation canals, cut down gardens and vineyards, plundered everything that had survived. This alien cripple did not reach his aim; he neither broke down the resistance of the Georgian people nor subordinated King Giorgi to himself, though he had terribly devastated the country. In 1403, Tamerlane concluded a peace-treaty with King Giorgi and celebrated the end of warfare in Georgia with great festivities. But this was his last success. He died at the beginning of 1405, the empire put together with so much blood, and so many victims disintegrated at once.

The peoples of Transcaucasia threw away the yoke of the conquerors and started fighting for liberation. Giorgi VII was the standard-bearer of this fight. The bloody inroads of this last descendant of the Mongols that had lasted for many years had an extremely negative effect on Georgia. The population diminished disastrously; the towns and villages,

* The country between the Mtkvari and the Araxes.



strongholds and palaces, churches and monasteries were destroyed and devastated, the irrigation canals and other buildings of economy were out of order, once flourishing vineyards and cornfields were razed to the ground. Various Turcoman nomadic tribes settled down near Georgia. They perpetually made incursions into the weakened and fallen country. Two kings were killed in the fights against them—Giorgi VII (1407) and Konstantine I (1412).

Georgia in the 15th century

The Disintegration into Kingdoms and Principalities Social and Economic Situation in Georgia in the 15th Century and Springing Up of the System of Satavados (Principalities)

Tamerlane's invasion and his bloody raids that had lasted for many years had extremely serious consequences. The country had scarcely healed the wounds inflicted by almost a hundred year domination of the Mongols that this other catastrophe that was like a natural calamity befell it. Tamerlane during his repeated incursions tried to raze the country to the ground. True, he did not reach his aim, but he destroyed Georgia's political power and the country's economy. The population of Georgia became considerably less in number, the irrigation canals were damaged. A lot of peaceful time and workers were to be had to restore the destroyed gardens, vineyards and buildings. But there were no external and internal conditions for that. The level of culture economy also became much lower. The worker on the land who always expected wars and attacks did not take up complicated branches of economy, he was satisfied with the minimum quantity of crops.

Urban life also fell into decay. At one time rich and flourishing city of Tbilisi was destroyed and deserted in the 15th century. Kutaisi, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Ateni, etc. became small towns. The Black Sea coastal towns - Batumi, Poti, Sukhumi turned into insignificant fortresses and small towns. The economic relations between various parts of the country ceased. The economy became of an extremely natural character.

An utterly unfavorable foreign political and economic situation coincided with the above-mentioned internal situation in economy. Various nomadic tribes of Turcomans gained strength in the countries of Transcaucasia, adjacent to Georgia and on the territory of Iran beginning with the 15th century. Their aim was to plunder and occupy our country. In the middle of the same century (1453), Ottoman Turks put an end to the Byzantine Empire too. They spread their domination over the southern and northern shores of the Black Sea, and also over Ciscaucasia. Owing to this, Georgia lost the possibility of contacting European countries. Extremely important trade and economic relations with Italian cities and other countries of Europe ceased too. Having uncultured and aggressive Osmanli Turks for neighbors instead of highly cultured and well-developed Byzantium made Georgia's situation worse from the western side as well. All this created conditions



inside the country favorable for appearing and developing a number of negative social and political events.

The direct and indirect increase of taxes resulted in the fierce opposition of the peasantry. The feudal lords used various methods to suppress this opposition. It was maintaining various categories of peasantry which disconnected their interests and weakened the class struggle. Besides, the necessity of suppressing the class opposition compelled the ruling class to turn to a certain self-organization. The king's power in Georgia of those days was rather weak. It did not fulfil its main function –having the peasantry subdued and establishing order in the country. It was gradually losing the social and economic support of its power—the stratum of the peasants cultivating land and taking part in wars whose main duty was military service. This layer of the population was by and by made to pay taxes and almost all of them had become serfs of separate landowners by that time. The same fate was shared by the petty aznauris that had been the support of the king's power before in the fight against the internal or foreign adversaries. They gradually became serfs of great feudal lords and turned into a force, opposing the king. Finally the stratum of free urban population disappeared as well. It had been the king's support in the struggle for creating and strengthening his autocratic power. The king lost control of the great part of the former state, king's or fiscal lands that had been given to the noblemen of high rank to rule (saeristavos) or for temporary ownership. Big feudal lords got back almost the whole immunity in their domains. The king was unable to interfere in the internal affairs of these estates; he could not even administer justice. Consequently, Satavados (principalities) sprang up in the greater part of Georgia.

The springing up of satavados was an extremely negative phenomenon. It was the result of the economic and social regress of the country too and afterwards it itself was a condition assisting this regress. The closed economy of these principalities prevented the restoration and development of wide economic relations. The feudal lords, being at the head of the principalities, strove to obtain greater independence, absolute freedom, thus they were against a powerful king and supported separate rulers of principalities or princes fighting against central power. The central power was defeated in this fight and consequently the united state of Georgia disintegrated into independent kingdoms and principalities. A foreign force readily interferes in this internal political process, and this accelerates the disintegration of the country and the formation of separate kingdoms and principalities as independent political units. In spite of the fact that Giorgi the Brilliant had restored the integrity of Georgia and the measures he had taken it did not become possible to restore the political body of Georgia torn by the Mongols. This process needed certain conditions and a long period. But the created serious situation did not allow it and it became impossible to retain the integrity of the country.

Georgia in the First Half of the 15th Century Foreign Political Situation Becomes Worse

In 1412, the throne of Konstantine I was occupied by his son Alexandre I who was called the Great by posterity, probably because of those vigorous steps that he had tried to take both for restoring the country and consolidating its ability of defence. In the



very first years of his reign he had to repulse the incursions of Turcomans. It was only in 1416 that comparative peace was established in the country, and the king was able to take care of the restoration work in the country.

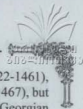
King Alexandre I tried to return the country into its earlier borders. In 1431, he reconquered the city-fortress Lore and the Lore Lowland where nomad Turcomans had settled down. He restored the Georgian aznauris' landownership on the annexed territory. In 1434-1435, Alexandre annexed Sivnieti (today's Karabagh and its adjacent regions). This added over 60000 households to Georgia's diminished population. King Alexandre also assisted the process of the settling of Armenian refugees in Georgia.

Alexandre I paid special attention to the strengthening of the Georgian church; he re-established the shaken landownership of the church: he renovated Georgian monasteries abroad; he also restrained with a firm hand the recalcitrant princes-Dadiani, Sharvashidze, and the Athabag of Samtskhe: he dismissed some of the cristavt-cristavis and appointed his sons - Vakhtang, Dimitri and Giorgi instead of them. But this had a negative effect. The princes whose role in the political life of the country had grown immensely were called "Kings" while their father was still alive and they did not obey their father. Their behavior was mostly influenced by the most powerful feudal lords - princes and tavads. King Alexandre I gave up his throne and took monastic vows in 1442 due to the disagreement that had arisen in the Royal family. His direct heir-Vakhtang IV did not reign long. He died in 1446 and his brother Giorgi VIII (1446-1466) became king. In his reign the anarchy and struggle inside the country became extremely serious. It resulted in the final disintegration of the united Georgia into separate kingdoms and principalities.

The occupation of Constantinople by Ottoman Turks and its consequences

On May 29th 1453, the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II fulfilled his and his forebears' dream-he attacked the capital of Byzantium-Constantinople and seized it. The last Empror of Byzantium-Constantine XI Paleologus was at the head of the city defence. He was engaged to be married to the daughter of Giorgi VIII, the last king of the united kingdom of Georgia. Constantine XI died the death of a hero together with the defenders of the city in the last battle. His fiancée, the daughter of Giorgi VIII, was later on married to the son of Vamiq Shabur's son, the Aragvi Eristavi.

The fall of Constantinople and the destruction of Byzantium was an extremely negative factor for Georgia. Georgia was deprived of the contacts with Western Europe. And Europe also lost the possibility of communicating with the East directly. The road lay through the Black Sea and Georgia. Therefore both parties tried to improve the created situation. The initiative was shown by the Roman Pope. In 1459 the envoy of the Roman Pope Pius II, Ludovic of Bologna, arrived in Georgia. He persuaded the king and princes of Georgia to take part in the fight of liberating Constantinople. Ludovic of Bologna was accompanied by a number of ambassadors who arrived in Rome in December of 1460, but unfortunately, the Roman Pope informed them that he had been unable to persuade European kings to take part in the war against Turkey, therefore he advised them that they should address the European rulers themselves. In May 1461 the Georgian



ambassadors presented themselves before the king of France-Charles VII (1422-1461), they also went to Ghent to visit the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the good (1409-1467), but they both refused to do it. While they were there king Charles VII died. The Georgian envoys attended the festive coronation of the new king, Louis XI (in August, 1461), and addressed him with the same request—to arrange a coalition warfare against the Turks. The royal court of France had internal political problems at that time so this diplomatic endeavor failed. From this time Georgia lost touch with the big politics of Western Europe and remained alone with its home and foreign problems.

Disintegration of Georgia into Kingdoms and Principalities

The failure of the ambassadors' mission in Europe was followed by the fight of kings and princes inside the country. It was begun by Qvarqvare Jaqeli, the Prince of Meskheta.

In 1461 he defeated his king with the help of Uzun-Hassan, the ruler of Turcomans. This assistance of Uzun-Hassan was not disinterested. After this his troops were stationed in the stronghold of Lore and the Lore Lowland was also occupied by the nomad Turcomans.

The ruler of Western Georgia Bagrat (he was the son of Giorgi, the brother of Alexandre I) took advantage of King Giorgi's defeat and began to act against him. In 1462, Giorgi VIII moved to Imereti to punish Bagrat. Bagrat was faithfully supported by Gurieli, Dadiani, Sharvashidze, and by Qvarqvare Jaqeli. Giorgi had some enemies in his army who did not want him to win the war against Bagrat, so he was defeated. In connection with this fact, the chronicler remarks that "The princes Dadiani, Athabagi, Gurieli and Sharvashidze freed themselves from the vassalage of kings", i.e. Bagrat was compelled to free the princes who had supported him from "Kings' vassalage". Thus, it was not the victory of Bagrat, aspiring to be a king, but the success of the forces, supporting the disintegration of Georgia.

Giorgi VIII did not lose heart. He severely punished Kartli tavads (princes), supporters of Bagrat, he took special measures, prepared well and in 1456 waged war against the Prince of Samtskhe to subjugate him. Qvarqvare Jaqeli met him with his army at Lake Taparavani. On the day before the battle a conspiracy was revealed in the King's camp. Qvarqvare took advantage of this disturbance, attacked his adversary and captured the King with his suite. Giorgi's nephew Konstantine, the son of Dimitri, escaped the captivity. The fight for the throne of the king of Georgia started mainly between Konstantine, the son of Dimitri, and Bagrat. The tavads of Kartli and Imereti grouped round these two pretenders. As for the Kakheti aristocrats, they found their own prince- one of the local aristocrats- Dimitri. Bagrat, the son of Giorgi, had more supporters in the fight for the throne of the king of all Georgia. Therefore, Konstantine thought it better to make a concession. They came to an agreement. Konstantine recognized Bagrat VI to be king of kings, however, he himself also remained a king. So Bagrat was compelled to agree to the existence of such half independent kings or princes. The foundation of his success was this policy of concession. Bagrat tried to subordinate Kakheti too, but was defeated.



Qvarqvar Athabag understood that he had not achieved anything by capturing King Giorgi. Another king ascended the throne of Georgia instead of Giorgi, who would have more claims towards him, therefore he decided to return the throne to Giorgi VIII. He married his daughter, Tamar, to the captive king, and sent him to Kartli with an army. The tavads of Kartli met Giorgi with animosity. It was natural that they should have feared that the king would punish them for treachery and Bagrat's support; therefore they preferred to be on the side of Bagrat. Giorgi VIII lost the war in Kartli and was compelled to go to Kakheti where he thought he had more supporters.

Kakheti *eristavis*, noblemen, and David who had become prince there, met Giorgi VIII with animosity, but a greater part of the population and petty and middling feudal lords—the *aznauris*, took the side of Georgia's legitimate king, and "King Giorgi conquered Hers and Kakhetians".

The situation was unstable in other parts of Georgia as well. The agreement between Bagrat and Konstantine soon broke. In 1470, Konstantine freed himself from Bagrat's dependence and was crowned king with great festivities. Bagrat VI remained the king of Western Georgia.

The inter-political struggle went on in Georgia after this as well. The situation in Kakheti was still unstable. The *eristavis* and the nobility did not obey King Giorgi and tried to make David their prince again. Giorgi relied on Kakhetian petty feudal lords in his struggle against the *eristavis* and the high nobility, and simultaneously he got in touch with Bagrat. The latter was also in need of Giorgi's support in his fight against Konstantine. Thus, the once irreconcilable adversaries became allies, and both of them took advantage of this alliance. Giorgi managed to strengthen his power in Kakheti, and Bagrat made Konstantine leave Kartli.

Having strengthened his power in Kakheti and defeated the *eristavis* and the high nobility, King Giorgi took the territories, that they had been rulers of, from them and appointed *mouravis* (managers) to rule over them. This prevented the endeavors of great feudal lords to appropriate the lands, belonging to the King and the Exchequer. The *mouravis*, managing small territories would not dare to disobey the king, as the *eristavis*, owning large *sacristavos* would. The latter aspired to more and more independence and wanted to become kings. Some *sacristavos* in Kartli and other parts of Georgia turned into *princedoms* (*satavados*), e.g. the Aragvi *Sacristavo*, the Ksani *Sacristavo*, the Racha *Sacristavo*, etc. As for Kakheti, there this process was stopped, due to the steps, taken by the King's government. In the 15th and 16th centuries, the king's power in Kakheti became stronger economically and politically, which was not the case in other parts of Georgia. This was also assisted by the military reform, carried out in Kakheti.

After Kakheti had become an independent kingdom, it was divided into four parts, the so-called *Sadroschos*, headed by bishops. The king appointed the latter, and thus, they were loyal to him. As for Kartli and Imereti, great feudal lords (*tavads*) turned out to be at the head of *Sadroschos*, and this made them more powerful and influential.

The ruler of Ag-Qoinlu Turcomans, Uzun-Hassan had occupied a great part of Iran by that time and was getting ready for the war against the Ottoman Turkey. He was defeated in the war against the Turks in 1473, and to compensate his losses he invaded Georgia. The Turcomans sacked Georgia, levied tribute upon King Bagrat, and returned to Iran with numerous booty.



In 1477, Uzun-Hassan made for Georgia again. Georgia was unable to put up proper resistance this time either. The population managed to leave their dwelling-places and thus the invader found deserted towns and villages. The Turcomans came to Tbilisi too, but it was also deserted. Uzun-Hassan occupied the city without fighting. Bagrat VI and Qvarqvare Athabag conducted negotiations with Uzun-Hassan and agreed to pay 16 000 ducats, and send tribute every year. Uzun-Hassan left his garrison in Tbilisi, took 5000 prisoners and left Georgia.

Tbilisi was not in the hands of the owners of white lambs for a long time. Uzun-Hassan died in 1478 and disturbances arose in his country. The Turcomans left Tbilisi without a battle and Bagrat regained the city.

In 1482 Samtskhe was invaded by the new ruler of the Turcomans, Iaqub-Khan. He occupied Akhaltsikhe, Atskuri and made Athabag Qvarqvare pay tribute.

Iaqub-Khan began regular attacks on Georgia from 1487. The Turcomans occupied Lower Kartli and fortified the strongholds of Agjaqal and Kaoziani there. They reached Tbilisi, but there they were met by a fierce resistance of the Georgians. The retreating enemy was attacked at the end of Kumisi by the Georgians and defeated crushingly.

In 1488 Iaqub-Khan ordered to wage "a holy war" against Georgia. An enormous army of the Turcomans, led by Khalil-Beg, started for Tbilisi. They took the Kojori fortress at the approaches to Tbilisi and besieged Tbilisi. King Konstantine with his army stood at Nitchbisi and tried to collect auxiliary forces. He addressed the Prince of Samtskhe and King of Kakheti and asked them to fight against the enemy with joint forces, but they refused to do it. After this he tried to conclude peace with the Turcomans. He even sent his mother to negotiate with Khalil-Beg, but with no result. In February 1389, the Turcomans occupied Tbilisi. Khalil-Beg left his garrison there and returned to the Khan's Court.

In 1490, Iaqub-Khan died and internal disturbances enveloped Iran. This situation enabled Konstantine to drive the Turcomans out of both Tbilisi and the whole Kartli. The King occupied and pulled down the Agjaqali and Kaoziani strongholds that had been the bases of the Turcomans' incursions. Having liberated Kartli, Konstantine was going to begin a fight to annex Samtskhe and Kakheti. With this aim, he convened the meeting of Darbazi (Council), where he raised a question of returning the seceded countries into the United Kingdom. However, the members of Darbazi unanimously advised him to give up the idea of fighting with this purpose. Such a decision meant reconciliation with the existing situation. Thus, in 1490, by the decision of the Darbazi the disintegration of Georgia into kingdoms and principalities was made official legally.

Foreign Political Relations of Georgian Kingdoms and Principalities at the End of the 15th Century

Western Europe, Russia and the Near East at the End of the 15th Century.
At the time when the united feudal kingdom of Georgia, due to extremely heavy internal and foreign conditions, was politically disintegrating, absolutely different processes were developing in Western Europe and Russia. At this period, the establishing of united national states is coming to an end in the greater part of Europe and these



countries are steadily developing socially, economically and politically. This process was assisted by the fact that the countries of Western Europe had not suffered from the invasions of backward savage tribes and had not experienced their domination that was so regular in Georgia and its adjacent countries. At the end of the 15th century, in 1480, Russia was also free from the Tatar-Mongols' long-term domination and began building a centralized state.

Two most powerful and aggressive states were established next to Georgia the Ottoman Empire south-west of her and first a powerful alliance of White-Lamb (Ag-Qoinlu) Turcoman nomads, and then on its ruins-Safavid Iran southeast of it. These states, the Ottoman Empire and the White-Lambs, and the Kizilbashi Iran as well were based on the rule of herdsmen-nomadic tribes with extensive economy. They had arisen on the basis of excessive violence. They could not have peaceful relations with neighboring peoples and their only aim was to conquer and plunder them. The foreign policy of the Georgian kingdoms and principalities was to find ways of defence from the aggression of these barbarian states.

After the disintegration of the united state of Georgia, it was impossible to conduct the policy of a united state. Each of the Georgian kingdoms and principalities worked out their own independent political course. Western Georgia was being approached by the aggressive state of the Ottoman Turkey, but its direct attacks began only from the 16th century. As for the Kingdom of Kartli and the Principality of Samtskhe, they had to wage serious wars against the invasions of Turcomans. The invaders even occupied Tbilisi several times. However, in the end they were unable to stay in these parts of Georgia.

The settling down of the Turcoman tribes and the establishing of the domination of the nomads were the greatest disaster for the country having intensive economy. The natural economy of feudal Georgia, based on the relations of masters and serfs was much more progressive than the extensive economy of the nomads. The Georgian feudal economy was based on advanced forms of landownership, necessary for its highly cultured branches (viti-culture, gardening, field-crop cultivation). It was also based on the Georgian peasant's high traditional culture of economy, which meant wide experience passed from generation to generation. The Georgian feudal relations were suited to these essential demands. As for the settling down of the nomads and their domination, it would certainly cause the changing of the rules of the Georgian feudal landownership and turning it into backward nomadic landownership; the intensive economy would yield its positions to the extensive economy, and the producing society would find itself under the predatory exploitation of Turcomans' military-nomadic aristocracy. The neighboring Armenia was an obvious example of this for Georgians. The cultured economy fell into decay after the Turcoman-nomads had become a dominating force there, and the class of the local landowners was gradually destroyed. Their place was occupied by the Turcomans' military-nomadic aristocracy. A considerable part of the Armenian population was compelled to leave their native land and move to Georgia or other countries en masse to live there. Due to the great resistance of the Georgian people, the Turcomans were unable to settle in Georgia at that time.

Relations with Russia. Kakheti Kingdom was the first among the Georgian kingdoms and principalities that established relations with Russia. Geographically Kakheti was situated closer to the roads that connected silk-producing important centers



(Guilan, Mazandaran, also the countries of Shak-Shirvan) with Moscow and then West European countries via the Caspian Sea and the Volga. Shirvan-Shah, Pharuk-lasar, sent his ambassadors to Moscow in 1465. The very next year Moscow also sent her envoys to Shirvan. The ruling circles of Kakheti learned about the established relations of their neighboring country with Russia.

In 1480 Russia finally got rid of the Tatar-Mongols' dominating yoke and began to develop steadily. What is more, after Byzantium was destroyed, Russian politicians made a statement that "Moscow was a third Rome" and in this way took the mission of protecting and guiding the Christian peoples of the east. Georgia was one of the first countries that acknowledged and recognized this mission.

The envoys of Kakheti King Alexandre-Nariman, Damiane and Shaki merchant Khozemarum arrived in Moscow in 1483. The Kakhetian envoys handed the great Prince of Russia Ivan III the letter in which Alexandre, King of Kakheti, called him the protector of Christian countries, the hope of the firmness of faith. It was very important for the Russian politicians that such an ancient Christian country and the church of such authority as Georgia and the Georgian church were had recognized this mission of Russia and its supremacy, therefore this fact was treated with great attention.

Soon these ambassadors were followed by other ambassadors. There is information in the Russian chronicle that the ambassador of the Georgian King Alexandre-Murat arrived in Moscow in the winter of 1492. No other information about this visit has been preserved, but indirect data make it obvious what interest these visits caused in Moscow. For instance, a well-known monument of literature – "A Legend of Queen Dinar" was created on the basis of the story told by the Georgian envoys. In this legend Georgia's glorious historical past and Georgian people's exemplary fight against the infidels are described.

Relations with Western Europe. The royal court of Kartli, unlike Kakheti, was looking for allies against the Moslem aggressors in the west. King of Kartli, Konstantine, even while fighting against the Turcomans coming from Iran, did not forget about the great danger approaching Georgia from the west in the face of Turk-Osmanlis. True, the Osmanli-Turks had not yet begun their attack on Georgia; they had already seized Constantinople, Trabzon, the Northern Black Sea littoral and closed the road to the west to Georgia. It was in 1459-1461 that King Giorgi VIII and other Georgian princes tried together to open this road to the European countries, but as we have seen, the trip of Georgian envoys to Italy and France and Burgundy turned out to be futile. The coalition warfare intended against the Turks was not realized then. The Georgian politicians tried to get in touch with the state of Venice, alarmed by the strengthening of the Turks, later too. And this time the attention of King Konstantine was drawn to Spain where just at that time the unification of the country came to an end and the remnants of the Arab domination were done away with.*

Konstantine got this information from his envoy "Kir-Nilos. The latter had met Spanish envoys in Jerusalem. He learned from them that the Arabs had been finally driven out of

*In 1492 the city-forress Granada, the last stronghold of the Arabs' domination, was taken. This was the end of the Spanish Liberation Movement, the so called reconquista. Earlier, in 1479 the unification of Spain was finished. At that time Ferdinand who was married to the Castilian Queen Isabella, became King of Aragon.



Spain and found it necessary to bring these envoys to Georgia. King Konstantine connected quite far-reaching plans with this newly created situation in Western Europe. He tried to realize the plan which implied the joint warfare against the Turk-Osmanlis of West European countries and Georgia, and considered the strengthened Spain to be the basic country. In 1495 he sent this very same Kir-Nilos to the Queen of Spain Isabella, and also told him to acquaint the heads of other European countries on his way with their aim. Kir-Nilos fulfilled this mission faithfully. The copy (translation) of the letter, sent by King Konstantine to Spain, was found in the Warsaw Archive. Evidently, Kir-Nilos, while traveling across Poland, acquainted the politicians of Poland and Lithuania with the aim of his journey and the King's letter. Poland might have expressed the wish of fighting against the Turk Osmanlis too. Poland was no less alarmed by the strengthening of the Turks and their domination on Northern Black Sea Coast. She had several unsuccessful clashes with them. Thus, Poland's joining the coalition against the Turk-Osmanlis seemed quite real.

The Georgian King's envoy, on his arrival in Spain, handed King Konstantine's letter to Queen Isabella. The King of Kartli congratulated her on her great victory and at the same time he acquainted her with the desperate situation of his country: "We are perpetually tortured by godless Persians and they have done us a lot of evil", we read in this letter, "they demand three things from us: either to pay them enormous tribute or fight together with them, or embrace their faith. They are numerous. We have remained alone after Constantinople, Trabzon and other Christian countries, and we are very few". On his part, King Konstantine took it upon himself to fight against the Osmanli Turks with all his might. The letter is dated from March 10, 1493.

This plan, as well as the first endeavor, seemed unrealizable from the very start. It is true that Spain was looking for the way to the East with great zeal and would be glad to be able to drive Turkey away from this road, but it was obviously beyond her power. The unification of European countries was impossible at that time, due to the great opposition, existing among them.

Georgia in the 15th century

Georgia's Neighbors in the 16th Century

Foreign-political situation of the Georgian kingdoms and principalities was extremely bad in the 16th century. On the west, Georgia's neighbor was the Turkish State that conquered Trabzon Empire in 1461, and subjugated the Crimea in 1475. After this, the Ottoman Turks spread their influence over the whole Black Sea northern littoral. The 16th century is the period of the highest power of the Ottoman Empire. At this time, it extended its domain on three continents because of aggressive wars. In the same period, it spread its political influence over the whole Northern Caucasus, causing the opposition of the mountain peoples against Georgia. This fact played an extremely negative part in the further social-economic and political development of Georgia in the following years.

The situation was not much better in the southeast either. There at the beginning of the 16th century, on the ruins of Al-Qoinlu Turcoman state, a no less aggressive and powerful state of Iran, with the Safavid dynasty at its head, was established. The Safavids



were descendants of Ardabil sheikhs who, supported by the Kizilbashi Turcoman nomadic tribes, established a powerful centralized State on the territory of Iran.

The Kizilbashi, fighting against Georgia, tried to destroy "the Georgian spirit" (i.e. the Georgian feudal landownership and social system, the Georgian statehood and Christianity) and establish their rule—"Kizilbashoba" (i.e. the Kizilbashi landownership, their own system of ruling the country, the Shiite trend of Islam). They had partially achieved that aim in Georgia's neighboring Armenia, they fought for it in Shaki-Shirvan Khanates too.

In the 16th century, these two states opposed each other and a bloody war that lasted for many years broke out between them in 1514. Both parties tried to conquer Georgia and did their best to reach their aim. The Georgian kingdoms and principalities worked out different forms and methods of fighting and relationship with the conquerors.

The Kingdom of Kartli in the First Half of the 16th Century

David X was king of Kartli from 1505. He had to repulse the attacks of both foreign enemies and neighboring Georgian kingdoms. In his reign nomad Turcomans began to settle down intensively on the territory of Lower Kartli. They oppressed the local population engaged in cultured farming. Their wish was only to conquer and to rob them. The danger of their incursions was permanent. The Georgian politicians estimated this danger properly and tried to take suitable steps, David X took advantage of the defeat of the Shah of Iran, Ismail I, in the war against the Osmanli Turks and tried to free his country from paying tribute to the Kizilbahi and to drive away the Turcomans who had settled down within the southern boundaries of Kartli. In answer to this Shah Ismail headed for Kartli with all his forces. The decisive battle took place near Teleti in 1520. In spite of the Georgians' initial success, it was the Kizilbashi who won a victory and occupied Tbilisi.

Having invaded the capital, the enemy started pillaging, killing and taking the local population prisoner. They defiled the Sioni Cathedral and other churches of the Georgians. They built a mosque at Metekhi Bridge and stationed their garrison in the Tbilisi fortress. The Shah had determined to conquer Kartli for good. The Turcomans began settling down in Lower Kartli intensively. The Kizilbashi made Agiaqala fortress their base. In spite of all this Shah Ismail did not manage to conquer Kartli once and for all. The Georgians continued fighting and did not let the enemy gain a foothold in the country.

Shah Ismail died in 1524 and permanent internal disturbances began to rage in Iran. These wars continued until the 40-s. This situation made it easy for the Georgians to defeat the Kizilbashi and to drive them away from Kartli. David X seized the city of Tbilisi and destroyed the garrison. The Agiaqala fortress was seized too and the Turcomans that had settled down in Lower Kartli were driven away from the Georgian territory.

In spite of this success, King David X abdicated and took monastic vows. His heir, Luarsab I (1527-1556), headed the fight against the Kizilbashi conquerors.

In 1541, the new Shah of Iran, Shah-Tahmasp, entered Karabagh with a large army and summoned Georgia's kings and princes to himself. Kakheti King Levan and the son of the Samtskhe Athabag, Kaikhosro, presented themselves before him and expressed



their readiness to obey him, only Luarsab felt it dishonorable to present himself before the Shah. Shah Tahmasp separated 12000 mounted men-at-arms from his army and ordered them to attack Tbilisi. The enemy army reached Tbilisi at night. Luarsab was not in the capital. Shah-Tahmasp stationed his garrison in the Tbilisi fortress, divided the rest of the army into two parts and sent them to capture Luarsab.

King Luarsab did not lose heart in that critical situation. He did not have enough forces to fight against the enemy face to face, therefore, he sent guerilla detachments against the enemy and did them great harm. Shah-Tahmasp was compelled to go back with his diminished forces.

King Luarsab I did not think only about the interests of the Kingdom of Kartli. He always supported the Georgian kings and princes fighting against the conquerors.

In January, 1547, Shah-Tahmasp moved to Meskheta from Shirvan. He occupied Javakheti Akhalkalaki and sacked the estates of the Diasamidzes, Luarsab's supporter tavads. From there he headed for Lower Kartli. Luarsab was unable to fight against the enemy face to face, but he compelled the Shah of Iran to leave Georgia by incessant attacks. Thus, Shah-Tahmasp did not manage to subjugate Luarsab this time either; as for the damage that he had suffered, it was great. As the chronicler remarks the Kartli population "killed innumerable Kizilbashi" in various battles. Imereti King Bagrat and Kakheti King Levan presented themselves before the retreating Shah. The latter was compelled to give them rich gifts and be satisfied with their verbal loyalty. The Shah was disappointed by his defeat and disability of subjugating Kartli.

It was in 1551 that Shah-Tahmasp invaded Kartli a third time. But he still encountered steady resistance of the population. Quite a few of his raiding units suffered severe damages and were made to retreat. The Shah was unable to achieve success this time either and was compelled to go back to Karabagh.

Shah-Tahmasp's main forces having left Kartli, King Luarsab slaughtered the Kizilbashi stationed in Tbilisi and liberated Tbilisi too. Shah-Tahmasp, alarmed by this success of Luarsab, invaded Sabaratiano, Lower Kartli, in 1554. His aim was to capture Luarsab. Having sacked Lower Kartli, the Kizilbashi moved to Inner Kartli. After fierce battles, they again occupied Tbilisi, raided Mtskheta, destroyed Gori Fortress, but still were unable to capture Luarsab. Shah-Tahmasp made his army attack the fortresses near Gori. There he captured Luarsab's mother and the families of many tavads.

The Shah hoped to gain ascendancy over King Luarsab and Georgian politicians by means of these captives, and thought he would finally subjugate Kartli. King Luarsab followed the retreating enemy, even fought against the enemy's rear-guard several times, but was unable to rescue his captive mother. The Queen of Kartli, Nestan-Darejan, Luarsab's mother, did not allow the enemy to use her against her country. She committed suicide, having taken poison. This attempt of Shah - Tahmasp failed as well.

Kartli after the Peace – Treaty of Amassia. On May 29, 1555 a peace – treaty was concluded between Iran and Turkey in the city of Amassia. This treaty ended an almost forty-year-long war between these two countries. According to the terms of this treaty, Kartli and Kakheti, and also the eastern part of Samtskhe were assigned to Iran, and Western Georgia and the western part of Samtskhe to Turkey. The Georgian people did not recognize this arrangement of Turkey and Iran. The country, divided by the aggressors between themselves, factually had not been conquered by



them. The Georgian people continued fighting against the oppressors implacably, but this fight became more difficult after the peace – treaty of Amssia, for the Georgian politicians did not have a chance to use the opposition that had existed between the two countries before. After this, both Iran and the Ottoman Empire avoided interfering in the affairs of the countries “belonging to the other party”. Besides, the restoration of united Georgia became almost impossible, for neither Iran nor Turkey would allow joining the part of Georgia “belonging to one” “to the other part” belonging to the other”. A great part of the Georgian kings and princes gradually chose the way of coming to terms with the powerful conquerors. It was only King Luarsab who continued fighting. He attacked the Kizilbashi that had settled down in Inner and Lower Kartli with greater energy and took back the fortresses that they had occupied. He also fought against the garrison, stationed in Tbilisi.

In 1556, the ruler of Karabagh, Shahverd Sultan, advanced on Kartli, against Luarsab, at the head of a large army. He obeyed the Shah’s order. The battle took place near the village of Garisi, in Ktsia (Khrami) Gorge. The significance of this battle is proved by the fact that its description can be found in the works of both Georgian and Persian historians. King Luarsab, being already old, entrusted the command of the army to his elder son, Simon, and he himself with other noblemen and priests of high rank encamped on a high hill nearby and waited for the end of the battle. Simon with the Georgian army attacked the enemy and dispersed their troops with many casualties. Shahverd Sultan fled from there when he unexpectedly ran into King Luarsab and his suite, encamped on the hill. The elderly men started to fight against them bravely. King Luarsab was in the centre of fighting. He fought until his weapons were all broken, and his horse’s foot fell into a hole. The king who had fallen to the ground was wounded to death. At this time the victorious Simon, following the enemy, appeared, but this joy of great victory was spoiled by the tragic death of the hero King. The story has it that the King before he died had told his people to stop mourning and take care of the country. The King was buried in Svetitskhoveli, at Mtskheta, according to his will.

The significance of the fight of Kartli, headed by Luarsab I. The implacable fight of Kartli against the conquerors that lasted for many years was very important for not only Kartli, but also the independence of the whole Georgia. This implacable fight was the reason that the enemy was compelled to make concessions for the other parts of Georgia and to be content with the obedience on comparatively advantageous terms. Luarsab did not fight only to defend Kartli as it was. He would always appear in the part of the country, which needed help. That was why the historian Beri Egnatashvili remarked, “If King Luarsab had not fought so much, Georgia would be the country of Saracens, and if there are any parts of Georgia now, they owe their existence to his sword.” And Parsadan Gorgijanidze wrote, “King Luarsab was famous for his bravery among the Georgian kings and princes, beginning with the old ones to the new ones. He was a good commander himself; intrepid, generous and ready to give freely... Good-looking and fearless in war, a real Christian, the Ottomans and the Kizilbashi were always afraid of him. The neighbors served him as serfs and he himself was too proud to become anybody’s serf.” Luarsab’s name became a banner in the fight of Georgia for national independence in the dark ages of Turco-Persian aggression.



Imereti Kingdom and Samtskhe Principality In the First Half of the 16th Century

Imereti Kingdom and the Principality of Samtskhe faced the danger of being conquered by the Ottoman Empire from the beginning of the 16th century. In those dark times, the princes of Samtskhe assisted the enemy in achieving its aim with their shortsighted and imprudent policy. For fear of finding themselves subjugated by the kings of united Georgia, they deepened the chasm more and more and finally found themselves subjugated by the Turks and the Kizilbashi.

In 1510 a large army of the Ottomans, headed by Sultan's heir Selim-Pasha, entered Samtskhe. Then the Turks, via Zekari pass, invaded Imereti and sacked the country terribly. The young king of Imereti, Bagrat, the son of Alexandre (1510-1565), did not have time to put up a proper resistance to the enemy. The Turks occupied Kutaisi, Gelati; raided villages and with innumerable captives and rich spoil left the country. It is true, that this invasion did not yet aim at conquering the country, but it was obvious that they would soon come to conquer Imereti. Apart from Samtskhe, the Turks were approaching Western Georgia from the Black Sea littoral. They had occupied Chaneti in the south of the Black Sea coast and began to establish their rules there. They fortified Gonio fortress at the mouth of the River Chorokhi and turned it into a bridge-head against Guria and Ajara. Their influence also extended over the Abkhazian tribe of the Jikhs in the Northern Black Sea littoral from where attacks on the Guria-Odishi-Abkhazian territories of the Black Sea coast became frequent.

In 1533, the princes of Megrelia and Guria, headed by Imereti King Bagrat, began to fight against Jikhi, but this war ended in failure.

Real danger for Imereti was from Samtskhe, for it was clear that the Turks would soon occupy the country that had separated from Georgia, and after this, it would not be difficult for them to conquer the whole of Western Georgia. Quarquare III Prince of Samtskhe (1516-1535), was against the union with the king of Imereti; it was clear he was going to take the side of Turkey.

In August, 1535, King of Imereti Bagrat, accompanied by the Princes of Megrelia and Guria entered Samtskhe. The battle at the village of Murjakhethi, near Akhaltsikhe, that took place on August 12, ended in the victory of the king of Imereti. He also managed to capture Quarquare. The tavads of Samtskhe took Quarquare's son, Kaikhosro, to Turkey and asked the Sultan to help him. The Sultan's court took advantage of this fact. He sent his army from there. In 1543 Musa-Pasha, the ruler of Erzerum, entered Samtskhe with an army of 22000 men-at-arms and European artillery, but King Bagrat destroyed the enemy's army at the village of Karagaji.

The new more numerous armies of the Ottomans, commanded by the pashas of Erzerum and Diyarbekir advanced on Georgia in 1545. Bagrat summoned the princes of Guria and Samegrelo to fight against the enemy. King Bagrat asked the King of Kartli, Luarsab, for help too. Luarsab immediately responded to the appeal. The battle took place at the southern frontier of Samtskhe, at Basiani, in the Sokhoista valley. The fate of the battle was decided by the numerical superiority of the enemy. In spite of it, the Georgians had fought bravely. The defeated kings returned to their respective domains. As for Kaikhosro, he became an Athabag, but in reality the Turks became rulers of Samtskhe.



The Turks strengthened their aggression upon Meskheti. In 1549-1550 they annexed Tao to the Ottoman Empire, as it was mentioned they had taken Chaneti from Gurili and established Ottoman customs there. In 1551, the Turks got hold of the upper part of the River Mtkvari with the city of Artaani and occupied the western part of Samtskhe, the local tavads clearly felt the great danger that the domination of the Turks would bring. Therefore, they turned their backs on Kaikhosro and appealed to King Luarsab. Luarsab occupied a great part of Eastern Meskheti. Being at a loss what to do, Kaikhosro turned to Shah-Tahmasp for help. The Shah of Iran moved to Samtskhe and sacked the estates of the tavads who were Luarsab's supporters, he captured and destroyed fortresses and caves, people's hiding places, mercilessly massacred the local population. It was then that the splendid ensemble of Vardzia was destroyed. As the Persian historian informs us, at the end of the battle Shah-Tahmasp himself came to see the town carved in rock. He ordered to slaughter even the monks, taken prisoner. The enemy took great wealth, amongst it many valuable books, away from Vardzia. The Shah gave the devastated and sacked country to Kaikhosro.

Athabag Kaikhosro was the head of the country only nominally. Finally, he went to Iran and died there in 1573.

King Bagrat did his best to subjugate Guria and Samegrelo principalities, but they made the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire their master and protector. Thus, King Bagrat was defeated in his fight against the princes. Nevertheless this vigorous and gifted King continued trying to subjugate the princes and strengthening the king's power.

The measures that King Bagrat took in the sphere of the affairs of church are noteworthy. He restored the old and established new episcopacy centers, e, g. Gelati, Khoni and Nikortsminda bishoprics and appointed people loyal to him at their heads. At the same time he appointed his supporters at the head of the old centers. Pagan and Moslem influence had gained strength on the territory of Abkhazia due to the settling of the Moslems and mountain people there, and the Georgian culture and Christianity had weakened. Because of that the King of Imereti moved the center of the catholicate of Western Georgia from Bichvinta to Gelati. In the middle years of the 16th century, Bagrat convened a Church Council where the most urgent social issues were discussed. The council adopted a resolution to strengthen the fight against selling captives, stealing and robbing, murder, burgling churches and other crimes that were so wide-spread in the country.

The question of selling the local people as slaves was very actual at that period in Western Georgia. This "disease" acquired a catastrophic character after the Turks became their neighbors. The Turks needed a great number of slaves for their janissaries, patriarchal economy or families (harems). They brought them from Georgia, Ciscaucasia, Northern, Black Sea littoral, Kuban, the Crimea, Ukraine and the Christian countries of the west. Bagrat began an indefatigable fight against this evil. The above-mentioned Church Council resolved that all those who would be found guilty of capturing slaves and selling them were to be put to death.

Carrying out this resolution in the situation when the system of tavads' estates dominated was not very easy. While King Bagrat was alive this resolution was carried out more or less. In the reign of the following kings the situation changed. The local tavads, and especially the Sultan's court were against forbidding selling the captives. Selling captives became of a greater scale with the strengthening of Turkey's influence on Western Georgia.



The Kingdom of Kakheti in the 16th Century

Unlike other Kingdoms and principalities of Georgia, the Kingdom of Kakheti developed comparatively peacefully. After Levan, the son of Giorgi ascended the throne and was crowned king (1518) in Bodbe Monastery with great festivities, he steadily followed a different course of foreign policy, viz, he managed to rescue the country from sacking invasions of aggressors by means of clever diplomacy, acknowledging formal vassalage and paying small tribute. In addition, the aggressors, fearing lest Kakheti should join fighting Kartli, were compelled to make concessions and to be satisfied with this formal submission.

King of Kartli David X having acknowledged Levan as King of Kakheti, an agreement was concluded between them to fight against the enemy with joint forces, but this union was not strong, and later on the unification of both countries was scarcely possible. During the invasion of Shah-Tahmasp of Kartli Kakheti stood apart and tried to avoid the incursion of the Kizilbashi on Kakheti by means of showing his submission to the Shah.

In 1541 before Shah-Tahmasp's first war against Georgia Levan presented himself before the Shah with numerous rich gifts. Shah-Tahmasp fearing lest Kakheti should take the side of Kartli when he fought against Luarsab accepted Levan's gifts and was satisfied with his verbal submission.

King Levan never took the side of Luarsab in his wars against Iran and followed his course of seeming obedience to the Shah. The Shah was compelled to be satisfied with this formal submission due to the implacable warfare that King of Kartli waged against him.

The situation created in the Northern Caucasus was especially important for Kakheti. There were numerous tribal-ethnic units there at the time. Among them, the Kazi-Kumukh principality was the strongest. It was a unity of the Daghestan tribes, which gradually fell under the influence of Turkey. Their religion was also Sunna. Kabardo Principality bordered this principality from the north-west. They were great enemies. Levan tried to have the shamkhals (rulers of this, principality) under his influence. He interfered in the disagreement between Shamkhals' kinsfolk, and with the purpose of having the Shamkhals dependent on himself he got in touch with his adversary, the Prince of Kabardino-Circassia. The latter, unlike the Shamkhal, chose a Russian orientation. Soon Kakheti politicians also tried to get into contact with Russia.

The Kingdoms of Kartli and Kakheti before the Second War between Iran and Turkey

After Luarsab I had died King Simon I (1556-1600) continued his policy. He came into contact with Levan, King of Kakheti, and with the purpose of strengthening this connection he married his daughter, Nestan-Darejan. Simon was getting ready for a large-scale offensive on the Kizilbashi. He collected his troops at the village of Tsikhedidi. An auxiliary force, sent from Kakheti, also came here. Prince Giorgi headed this force. The Kizilbashi learned about these preparations and attacked the Tsikhedidi camp unexpectedly. The Georgian army was defeated in this battle, Prince Giorgi was killed.



Soon King Simon's brother David took the side of the enemy. He presented himself before Shah-Tahmasp at Kazvin on December 25, 1561, and offered him his services. The Shah made him embrace Islam, gave him Tbilisi and Lower Kartli to rule and sent him back to Georgia with many presents. His duty was to fight against King Simon. A great part of the Georgians was still on the side of King Simon and continued fighting indefatigably against the Kizilbashi and the renegade traitors. King Simon defeated his Moslem brother Daud-Khan several-times and besieged Tbilisi too. Shah-Tahmasp sent fresh forces to help his faithful vassal. The battle took place on the bank of the River Algeti in 1569, at the village of Partskhisi. The Georgian army was less numerous compared to that of the Kizilbashi. In spite of this, the patriots fought against the enemy bravely. King Simon himself was fighting in the first rows of his troops, and killed a lot of Kizilbashi. The king, engaged in fighting, did not notice that he had gone far from the main part of his army. The Kizilbashi surrounded Simon. The small group of men-at-arms, fighting side by side with him, all were killed and did not manage to save the king from captivity. Shah-Tahmasp did his best to make Simon adopt Islam, but all in vain. The captured king was locked in the prison of Alamuti.

The King of Kakheti Levan felt that danger was approaching him too. The situation in Kakheti became much worse after the Kizilbashi had conquered Shaki and Shirvan, and especially after Iran and Turkey had concluded a peace-treaty. If up to that time, the Shah of Iran had been content with Kakheti's formal vassalage now he was preparing to pave the way for her conquest. Levan's son Iese was a hostage at the Shah's court. He had been made to recant and embrace Islam and appointed ruler of Shaki. Shah-Tahmasp intended to make him king of Kakheti. The Shah of Iran took the principality of Tsakhuri, situated in the upper part of the River Samur, beyond the main range of the Caucasus, the domain of Kakheti, away from her and appointed a Mohammedan ruler (Adikurkul-Beg) there as well.

Just at that very time, the Russian State appeared very actively in the Caucasian arena. In 1552-1556, Ivan the Terrible annexed the Kazan and Astrakhan Khanates and occupied the most important Volga waterway. Ivan the Terrible won the ruler of Kabardinia, Temurqua, over to his side and in 1557 became his official protector. He married Temurqua's daughter Maria. The King of Russia sent detachments of gunners and Kossaks to help his father-in-law in the fight against the Shamkhal.

In 1561, the envoy of Kakheti King arrived in Moscow. He brought King Levan's deed to Ivan IV. Ambassadors arrived in Moscow several times after this. It can be supposed that King Levan asked Russia for military help. In fact, Russian detachments had come within the borders of the Aragvi saeristavo during the above-mentioned battles. At that period, the Aragvi Eristavi became a vassal of Kakheti King, having refused to be a vassal of Kartli. When King Simon was fighting in Kartli against his renegade brother Daud-Khan the kingdom of Kakheti took a particular interest in Aragvi Gorge through which they could communicate with Russia; as for the Aragvi eristavis they looked with a greedy eye at the mountain regions of Kakheti (Tusheti, Pshavi and Khevsureti). The coincidence of these interests made the Aragvi eristavis vassals of Kakheti.

In 1562-1563 while the Russian troops acted in Ciscaucasia, King Levan stationed their detachments in the fortresses at the borders of Kakheti to defend the country from the Shamkhal's incursions; this caused the indignation of the Shah of Iran. King Levan



sent the Russian detachments back immediately. In 1564, a large group of Kakhetian envoys arrived in Moscow, headed by Jakob, but Russia avoided spoiling relations with Iran and Turkey and withdrew her troops from Ciscaucasia.

The Second Turco-Persian War and Georgia

After King Simon had been taken prisoner a great part of Kartli still did not submit to Daud-Khan. He practically ruled only over Tbilisi and Lower Kartli.

King Levan of Kakheti having died, his son Alexandre II (1574-1695) ascended the throne. He became king only after he had won the war against his nephews. Alexandre pursued the course of his father's foreign policy.

Giorgi, the son of Bagrat, became king of Imereti in 1566. In his reign, the princes and tavads got out of control. They attacked one another, sacked one another's estates, captured people and sold them for slaves in Turkey. At the same time, the epidemic of plague spread in 1568 that did a great harm to the population of Imereti.

In Samtskhe after Kaikhosro's death, the brothers Manuchar and Quarquare contended for the title of athabagi. As for the principality, it was factually ruled by their mother Dedisimedi who had the head of the tavads' reaction Varaza Shalikashvili killed. This was followed by endless disturbances in the country. This was the situation that reigned in Georgia at the time when the second war between Iran and the Ottoman Turkey broke out.

In 1578, Turkey took advantage of the disturbances that began after the death of Shah-Tahmasp, broke the peace-treaty of Amassia and advanced on Georgia with the army of 300000 men-at-arms, headed by Mustapha-Lala-Pasha. The decisive battle took place at Lake Childir on August 9. In this battle, the Ottomans inflicted a crushing defeat on the Kizilbashi. Manuchar presented himself before the victorious commander of the Turks. Quarquare and Dedisimedi were also compelled to submit to the Turks. After this, the Sultan's army made for Tbilisi and on August 24 they were already at the approaches to Tbilisi. Daud-Khan left Tbilisi without fighting, burned down the city and found refuge in Lore. Mustapha-Lala-Pasha stationed his garrisons in Tbilisi and Lore and moved to Kakheti. Kakheti king Alexandre II met him at Sartichala. Here negotiations were carried on. The king turned out to be a skilful diplomat and clever politician. At first, the Turk's commander demanded that the king should embrace Islam and take part in the war against Iran. The king of Kakheti Alexandre managed to remain Christian and king of Kakheti. True, he was to take the title of Beylerbey, but it was only a formality. Kakheti was to pay tribute to Turkey and practically changed a master. She was to become a vassal of Turkey instead of that of Iran. As for the tribute, instead of tax, paid by a peasant's household (that meant taking a census of Kakheti by the Turks, i.e. establishing the Turks domination in the country) the king of Kakheti promised to pay annual tribute of 30 packs of silk, 20 captives and 20 birds (small game). The participation in the war against Iran was restricted only to the war in Shaki. Kakheti king was interested in this fight, for the Shah of Iran had appointed his rival brother Isa-Khan who had adopted Islam ruler of Shaki, and Alexandre himself wanted to drive him away from



there. King of Kakheti occupied Shaki, drove Isa-Khan away from there and made his son Irakli ruler instead of him. Thus, Kakheti King's diplomacy triumphed. The country was not only saved from being subjugated and ravaged by the Ottomans, but her influence was spread over the neighboring Shaki with the assistance of the Turks.

Having occupied Shaki, the Turks conquered Shirvan and began establishing their rule there. The local population put up great resistance to the conquerors. The situation was complicated by the fact that this enormous Ottoman army was not connected with the rear, and the transport train with provisions and reinforcements was destroyed by the attacks of the Kartli population. Mustapha-Lala-Pasha was compelled to leave Shirvan, go back, and spend the winter in Erzurum.

Meanwhile the Shah's court changed its attitude towards Georgia. They liberated the captive king Simon and returned him to Georgia to fight against the Turks. The condition they asked him to fulfil was to embrace Islam. Simon was compelled to agree to that condition, but as soon as he arrived in Georgia, he rejected Islam and returned to Christianity. He headed the Georgian people's fight against the conquerors. The Georgians, fighting for the freedom of the country, rallied around him. After the main force of the Turks had left Georgia, the king cleared Gori and Lore from them and on March 30, 1579 surrounded Tbilisi. Lala-Pasha sent troops with provisions and other reinforcements from Erzerum several times to help the Ottoman garrison in Tbilisi, but the Georgians laid an ambush for them and damaged them greatly. The position of the Ottoman garrison in Tbilisi was serious; a great part of Kartli was loyal to King Simon. Thus, the Turks had practically lost control over Kartli. This meant that they would lose foothold in other countries of the Caucasus as well. This failure of Turkey was the reason why Sultan Murad III dismissed Lala-Pasha in 1580, and appointed Sinan-Pasha commander instead of him. He also appointed him great vizier.

The new commander of the Ottomans advanced on Tbilisi with a larger army, and on the way occupied Lore, Dmanisi and entered Kartli. Here King Simon destroyed his advanced detachment. However, Sinan-Pasha managed to enter Tbilisi. The Ottoman conquerors, made a certain concession. They dismissed the Ottoman Beylerbey of Tbilisi and appointed Yusup-Pasha, the son of Imereti King Giorgi, instead of him. Such a step aimed at disconnecting the forces of the Georgian people. It was a method that had been used many times and it produced a certain result. For instance, the princes of Samtskhe – Quarquare and Manuchar faithfully served them. As for Manuchar, he had adopted Islam and taken the name of Mustapha-Pasha. The King of Kakheti too, willingly or unwillingly, bowed his head to the Turks and did not take part in this fight. And what is more, there was obvious enmity between the king of Kakheti and Simon for certain reasons. The Turks made Kartli and Imereti opposed to one another too in this situation. The Georgian politicians managed to reconcile Alexandre and Simon. Soon Manuchar also rebelled against the Turks and took the side of King Simon. While the Turks suffered failure after failure, at the request of the Shah of Iran King of Kakheti again took the side of Iran. The Shah demanded that Alexandre should send his youngest son Konstantine as a hostage to him.

In August of 1582 the Turks' army of 20000 men-at-arms, headed by Hadim Mehmed Pasha, Beglar-Beg of Diyarbekir, entered Kartli. The prince of Samtskhe-Manuchar was to help him. Mehmed Pasha seized Gori, stationed his garrison there and he himself



set up his camp in Mukhrani Valley. Simon, King of Kartli, attacked the Turks there and inflicted a crushing defeat on them. The Georgians got hold of enormous booty. Mehmed Pasha with a very small part of his army reached Tbilisi. The disgraced Ottoman commander blamed his defeat on Manuchar, he suspected that he had a secret connection with Simon and decided to kill him treacherously. The Italian author Tomazo Minadoi describes this situation in detail. Mehmed Pasha summoned Manuchar to a military council. Manuchar exercised proper caution and presented himself at the meeting with fifty armed Georgian men-at-arms. The Prince of Samtskhe was shown into the tent without arms. The negotiations over, at the sign from Mehmed Pasha one of the Turks drew out his sword, but Manuchar was quicker. He seized his sword and cut him in two. After this he wounded another Pasha as well and rushed at Mehmed Pasha himself, inflicting five wounds on him. Hearing the noise, Manuchar's Georgian men-at-arms rushed in and took their master to a safe place. This occurrence was followed by an uprising of the population in Samtskhe. The army of the Turks immediately left Samtskhe and headed for Kars. Manuchar rejected Islam and returned to Christianity. He cleared the fortresses and villages of Samtskhe from Turks, at the same time he married King Simon's daughter Elene to consolidate his union with the King.

In 1583, King Simon after fierce battles liberated the fortresses of Lore, Dmanisi and Samshvilde. According to some information, he occupied Tbilisi too, but retained it only for a short time. Turkey was greatly alarmed by Simon's victories and the very next year she sent a new commander-in-chief Perhad-Pasha with a large army and artillery. After fierce battles the Turks captured Lore, Dmanisi again and advanced on Tbilisi. The enemy set up a camp at Khatisopeli. King Simon with his army also came here. It is noteworthy that the king himself, dressed as an ambassador, presented himself before the commander of the Turks, as if with the purpose of negotiating armistice. In reality, he intended to reconnoiter the enemy forces. Unfortunately, he did not notice the part of the Turks' army, encamped beyond a mountain. Next morning, at dawn, Simon with a detachment of 4000 men-at-arms assaulted the Turks unexpectedly and damaged them greatly, but a fresh army of 10000 men joined the Turks, saving them from total destruction. Simon was compelled to leave the battlefield. The Turks were amazed at the extraordinary valor of Simon and his small detachment. According to Tomazo Minadoi, Simon with this battle "left an obvious trace of his heroic resistance in the killed and wounded, taken aback and amazed enemies". Simon was really a man of extraordinary bravery. The Turks called him "deli" (wild, furious) Simon for his boundless courage.

In 1587, the Turks tried once more to break Georgia's resistance and sent a large army, headed again by Perhad-Pasha. One part of the army entered Samtskhe. Manuchar turned to Simon for help. The King of Kartli headed for Akhaltsikhe immediately, but another army of the Turks invaded Kartli and Simon was compelled to take care of his Kingdom. Perhad-Pasha occupied Tbilisi again and fortified other fortresses of Kartli with fresh auxiliary forces. Nevertheless, the country obeyed only Simon. The Turks occupied Akhaltsikhe as well, they made Manuchar and his supporters leave Samtskhe and find refuge in Kartli.

In this period, the Ottoman Empire got the upper hand in the war against Iran. In 1588 they occupied Ganja-Karabagh. King of Kakheti was compelled to recognize the suzerainty of Turkey. Iran was already in a hurry to conclude a peace-treaty with Turkey. In the created situation, King Simon also thought it better to conclude a peace-treaty with Turkey:



He conducted negotiations with Perhad-Pasha, and to sign the peace-treaty, he sent envoys to Istanbul to the Court of Sultan Mourad III. According to the terms of the treaty, Simon was to pay annual tribute; instead, Turkey recognized him to be a Christian King of Kartli, acknowledged him as a rightful heir to the throne and promised that she would not interfere in the affairs of the country. This, of course, meant that Turkey gave up her intention of fully conquering the country and was content with the vassal-suzerain relationship.

The 10 year-long courageous fight of the Georgian people compelled the Ottoman Empire to give up the idea of the Turkification of Kartli. It was a great victory of the fighters for retaining their nationality and faith.

Simon I tried to annex Western Georgia too and in 1588-1590 waged three wars in Imereti, but this great cause remained unfulfilled, owing to the resistance of local princes and tavads.

Kakheti Enters the Protectorate of Russia

After Turkey had conquered Transcaucasia, the Shamkhal of Daghestan took her side. He began to attack Kakheti, encouraged and supported by his new protector. These attacks were mainly thievish incursions with the purpose of taking hold of captives and sacking and plundering the local civilian population. However, it was very difficult for a feudal state to fight against such an enemy. Thus, though Turkey had not conquered Kakheti, its influence became fateful for Kakheti. Besides, the ruling circles of Kakheti were well aware of the fact that as soon as Turkey finished war with Iran and Kartli she would find time for Kakheti too and would not be content with only vassal and suzerain relationship.

The domination of the Ottoman Empire in the Caucasus created great danger for Russia's political and economic interests. The Turks had tried several times to seize Astrakhan. It was necessary for Russia to have a loyal ally in Transcaucasia. The envoy of the Russian tsar, Rusin Danilov, commander of Astrakhan gunners, arrived in Kakheti in 1585. He was ordered to reconnoiter the situation in the Caucasus and convince the local rulers of the necessity of their turning to Russia for protection.

King Alexandre was pleased with this proposal. Iran was defeated and driven away from the Caucasus and she was too weakened to express any claims on Kakheti; on the contrary, she wanted to establish connections with Russia herself to use this powerful country against Turkey. Thus, Kakheti's relationship with Russia would not bring about any protest on the part of Iran. The most convenient road for Kakheti to reach Astrakhan passed through Daghestan. It was necessary to open this road to realize practically the political relationship, proposed by Russia. It meant the annexation of Daghestan by Russia and building fortresses along this road. It would be a guarantee of stopping the thieving incursions of the mountain people of Daghestan, and of breaking the vicious circle of the barbarian encirclement.

King of Kakheti sent his ambassadors-Priest Iakime, Monk Kirile and Circassian Khurshita together with Danilov, who was returning to Russia.

On arriving in Moscow, the Georgian ambassadors gave the Russian tsar Kakheti King Alexandre's deeds and gifts. The King of Kakheti in these deeds asked the tsar of



Russia for protection and raised a concrete question that the tsar should build a stronghold on the River Terek, station a large army in it and occupy the road from the Terek to Kakheti that passed through Daghestan. This would stop the Shamkhal's attacks on Kakheti. In case of necessity, Russia would be able to render help to Kakheti. On the other hand, it would be good for Russia too, for such steps would strengthen Russia's positions in the Caucasus and guarantee the security of the great trade road on the Volga ("the Silk Road").

After a month's negotiations, on September 28, 1587, King Alexandre with his sons and noblemen adopted a document in which he promised to be under the protection of Russia. On his part, the tsar of Russia, Fyodor, sent "a deed of grace" in 1589 and the terms of the agreement were affirmed by both parties: the Tsar of Russia undertook to protect Kakheti from her foreign enemies; and the King of Kakheti was to consider Russia's enemies to be his enemies, and her friends and allies to be his friends and allies; the Tsar of Russia was to build a stronghold on the Terek and occupy the road from the Terek to Kakheti; Russia undertook to provide for the garrison of this stronghold, and the king of Kakheti was to send gifts to Moscow annually.

Thus, the 1587-1589 acts were the first official agreements concluded between Russia and Georgia. Russia built a stronghold on the river Terek (1588) in accordance with this agreement and stationed her garrison there. Simultaneously she began to get ready for the war against the Shamkhal. Later on, in 1593-1595 this war took place, but it did not result in what both parties wanted: Russia could not gain a foothold in the territory of Daghestan and could not hold the road by which she would be able to communicate with Kakheti without any obstacles; as for the alliance between Russia and Kakheti, it enraged Turkey, but for king Alexandre's clever diplomacy (paying tribute in time, sending his elder son to the court in Istanbul, etc.), he would not have escaped the Sultan's ire. Kakheti Kingdom was firm in her decision to strengthen her alliance with Russia. After this, for twenty years, ambassadors had been regularly sent to Russia from Kakheti, as well as to Kakheti from Russia, until the new ruler of Iran, Shah Abbas I, broke off this relationship at a blow.

The Fight of Kartli against the Turk Aggressors in the 90-s of the 16th Century

Shah-Abbas ascended the throne of Iran in 1587 and took vigorous steps to improve the critical situation in the country. On March 21, 1590, he concluded a peace-treaty with Turkey. It is true that he yielded a great part of the territory according to the terms of this treaty, among it the whole of the Eastern Transcaucasia, but instead he achieved peace, absolutely necessary for getting ready for a new war. Shah-Abbas defeated the Uzbeks who attacked Iran from the north-east, stifled the unruly Kizilbashi tribes with strict repressions, decreased their role in the military forces and government of Iran, promoted Iranians and persons come from the Caucasian countries, formed a regular army and the guards, defending the Shah-consisting mostly of non-Kizilbashi (here also the Caucasians played the main part), widely used fire-arms in armament (artillery, arsenal). The inspirer of these steps and his closest assistant, Alaverdi-Khan, was a Georgian



whose name was Undiladze. He, a simple captive, reached the post of a kularagassi (Commander of the guard, defending the Shah) and later on became Beylerbey of Pharsi and the commander-in-chief of Iran.

The court of the Shah of Iran prepared for the revival of the war against Turkey not only by taking steps in their home affairs, but also tried to form a large coalition in which they also wanted to draw in Russia together with European countries. This was the reason that Shah-Abbas did not at first react to the alliance between Russia and Kakheti, and what is more, he tried to find a common language with the Christian countries of Europe with the help of the Christian Georgian kings-Simon and Alexandre. And the European countries, alarmed by the idea that after the peace-treaty of 1590 the Ottoman Empire would turn all her might against Europe, sent their agents to Iran and Georgia one after another and appealed to them to resume a joint war against Turkey.

King Simon responded to this appeal with enthusiasm. Letters that he sent to the Roman Pope, the German Emperor and the King of Spain have survived. In these letters, he wrote that the Kings of Kartli and Kakheti and the Shah of Persia had united and were ready to begin a decisive fight for the common cause. It is certain that King Simon wrote this with the consent and advice of Shah-Abbas, but the revival of this war and ending it in a final victory was mostly in his interests. Therefore, in spite of the fact that the agreement with Europe did not take place, and Iran did not begin war against Turkey, the king of Kartli began a war with Turkey in 1598 and besieged the Gori fortress.

The Ottomans had fortified the Gori fortress as well as they could and therefore it became difficult to take it. The Georgians took Gori in the spring of 1599 after a nine-month-long siege. After this Simon begins preparing for liberating Tbilisi.

Samtskhe, headed by Manuchar, also rose in rebellion. The Sultan, alarmed by the success of the insurgents, sent a large army to Georgia. Having reached the Algeti, the enemy laid camp in the place where a bridge had been and was getting ready for advancing on Tbilisi. Simon did not have time to collect his army, and decided to fight against the enemy with his scanty forces.

The chronicler informs us that the Georgians said good-bye to one another before the battle, received the eucharist and, doomed to death, attacked the enemy. The unequal battle lasted five hours. The Georgians began to retreat. Near Partskhisi, on a narrow road, the King's horse stuck deeply in the mud and it became difficult to take it out. Meanwhile the Turks overtook him. The King fought bravely to the last and did not surrender to the enemy. The commander of the Turks, Japar-Pasha, ordered to capture him alive. The captured Simon was sent to Istanbul.

The Armenian historian, Arakel of Tabriz, writes that having heard about the capturing of Simon, the Sultan ordered to decorate the streets in all towns and cities of his Empire and celebrate the event for three days.

On June 21, 1600, King Simon was brought to Istanbul. There the hero King of Kartli was locked in the well-known prison of Iedikule where after many years of imprisonment he died. After many efforts, the Georgians managed to bring the remains of the King, a staunch fighter for his country, over to Kartli and buried him in Mtskheta beside his hero father, King Luarsab.

This implacable fight against the Ottoman and Kizilbashi conquerors that had lasted for many years was of great significance for all Georgia. Because of these fights, Georgia



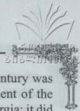
survived. Georgian statehood and social economic system were preserved, but still the insistent invasions of the most powerful aggressors resulted in losing the Southwestern part of Georgia where the Turks gained a comparatively firm foothold.

The Final Conquest of Samtskhe-Saatabago by Osmanli-Turks

An especially critical situation was established in Samtskhe-Saatabago after the peace-treaty of 1590. According to the terms of this treaty, this Georgian country was taken by the Turks, Manuchar and his supporters were compelled to leave Samtskhe. The Sultan's government began to establish the Ottoman rules of landownership and governing the country. Samtskhe-Saatabago was divided into eight sanjaqs or livas (the administrative units of Turkey). These were the livas of Akhaltsikhe, Khertvisi, Akhalkalaki, Childiri, Potskhovi, Petra, Phanaki and Great Artaani. In 1595 the Ottoman officials made up the register of the census of this part of Georgia, called "A big register of Gurjistan Vilayet". According to this register, there were 1160 villages in Samtskhe on which Ottoman taxes were levied. The Georgian landownership was gradually substituted by the Ottoman landownership. The Georgian hereditary-estate landownership which was well-suited to the traditional intensive farming was more progressive than the Osmanli military landownership. Thus, establishing the forms of Ottoman landownership by force meant the social-economic degradation of the country, regress that is so obviously corroborated by the further general development of this part of the country. The Georgian feudal lord faced an alternative- he was either to adopt Islam and enter the service of the Turks, retaining his estate in this way, for according to the Ottoman rule, the owner of the land (and a temporary one at that) could be only a mounted man-at-arms, and only a Mohammedan, or he had to give up the land of his forbears and leave the country. His estate would be given to a Turk mounted man-at-arms. The ottoman Government took away the estates from the Georgian feudal lords who were known to have taken an active part in the fights against the Turks. The Ottomans persecuted and oppressed the Georgian Church, took away their domains and gave them to Moslem clerics. They turned most of the churches into mosques. Extra taxes were levied on the remaining Christian population, etc. A great part of the Georgian population retained Christianity for quite a long time, and opposed the above-mentioned measures of the Turk officials. To oppress the Georgian population and to hasten the process of their Turkification the Sultan's government settled Turkish nomad and other tribes (e.g. Kurds) there.

Heavy taxes were levied on the local population, engaged in farming. National, religious oppression and arbitrariness was added to it. The peasants were unable to cope with these unbearable conditions and heavy taxation and ran away from their lands en masse.

The government of Turkey was compelled to make certain concessions and to let part of the Georgian nobility remain Christian and retain their lands. Some Georgian feudal lords who had adopted Islam were allowed to retain their estates. They cultivated the land according to the Georgian rules of farming. These were mainly the people who had assisted them to conquer the country. But these privileges were also temporary. In the long run the whole country was to be Turkified and to be made to adopt Islam.



Thus, the greatest misfortune of feudal Georgia by the end of the 16th century was the loss of its most important part—Samtskhe-Saatabago and the establishment of the Turks' rule there. The territory, being one third of the country, was lost for Georgia; it did no longer take part in the creation of her national culture. The part of feudal Georgia, that was one of the most advanced and cultured parts of the country, was on the way of degradation – the part that was the fatherland of Euthymius and Giorgi, the Athonites (of Mtatsminda), Beka Opizari and Shota Rustaveli.

Georgia in the 17th Century Shah-Abbas' Offensive on Kakheti at the Beginning of the 17th Century

At the beginning of the 17th century, Shah-Abbas paid a particular attention to the Kingdom of Kakheti. Kakheti was the only Georgian country, which had been developing peacefully for almost a century and a half, and had gained strength. The king of Kakheti Alexandre II entertained great hope that the union with Russia would be good for his country. He also managed to maintain good relations with Turkey. It is quite clear that the Shah of Iran did not like the King of Kakheti, and did his best to get rid of him.

In 1601, a palace revolution took place in Kakheti. Alexandre's elder son David compelled the sick king to take monastic vows, and hand the royal insignia over to him. Soon he imprisoned his younger brother Giorgi too. Shah-Abbas participated in these affairs clandestinely. But David was king for only a year and died unexpectedly in October, 1602.

David having died, Alexandre regained his kingdom and made Giorgi rule together with him.

Meanwhile, Shah-Abbas after a substantial preparation broke the peace-treaty, concluded with Turkey, and began an offensive. In 1603, he was already at the approaches to the fortress of Erevan. There he summoned the King of Kartli Giorgi X, the son of Simon, and the King of Kakheti Alexandre II to his camp. The king of Kartli immediately presented himself before him. As for the King of Kakheti Alexandre, after hesitating for a long time, he left Prince Giorgi to rule over the country and with part of the Kakhetian army went to the Shah. The Shah, of course, was offended by his being late, but did not show it and received him with great honor.

Having taken Erevan, the Shah allowed the King of Kartli to go back, as for Alexandre; he left him at his camp. It seemed doubtful that Alexandre would be liberated from this honorable captivity, but the King of Kakheti found a way out this time as well. In the wars with Turkey at the end of 1604 and the beginning of 1605 Iran was defeated and was retreating. The Iranians were unable to drive the Turks out of Shirvan. Alexandre took advantage of this situation and asked the Shah of Iran to let him go to Georgia on condition that he would drive the Turks out of Shirvan. Shah-Abbas was compelled to agree to the proposal of the King of Kakheti, but he still did not trust him. That was the reason that he made Alexandre's son Konstantine Mirza who had adopted Islam and was Persianized, accompany Alexandre with a Kizilbashi army who were ordered to act ruthlessly if they noticed that Alexandre intended to do anything against Iran.



At that time, Russian envoys, headed by Prince Tatistchev, had arrived in Kakheti. They renewed the agreement between Kakheti and Russia. At the same time, the Russian army began fighting against the Shamkhal, and according to the terms of their agreement, Kakheti was to send auxiliary forces to help them. Konstantine Mirza was categorically against it and demanded that the Kakhetian army should be sent to Shirvan. While consultations were held on this subject in the town of Dzegami, on March 12, 1605, by Konstantine's order the Kizilbashi assassinated King Alexandre, Prince Giorgi and the noblemen being in the palace with them at that time. Konstantine Mirza declared himself king but the Kakhetians did not recognize the prince who had killed his father as their king and began to get ready for an uprising. Ketevan, the daughter-in-law of King Alexandre, his eldest son David's widow, headed this uprising.

In spite of the fact that Konstantine was supported by powerful Shah-Abbas, his rule in Kakheti turned out to be short. The rebellious Kakhetians killed him in the fight on October 18, 1605. Queen Ketevan requested that the Shah should send her son Teimuraz to be king of Kakheti. Being at war with Turkey, the Shah avoided complicating the situation and causing a new rebellion in Kakheti, and agreed that Teimuraz should be crowned king according to Christian customs (1606). He postponed the revenge on Kakheti till some other time.

In 1606 Shah-Abbas took Karabagh and Ganja away from the Turks, then he entered Kartli and occupied the fortresses of Lore, Dmanisi and Tbilisi. In Tbilisi, he made Luarsab II, the 14-year-old son of the unexpectedly deceased Giorgi X, King of Kartli. He stationed his garrisons in the fortresses. Thus, the domination of the Osmanlis was replaced by that of the Kizilbashi.

The Sacking of Kakheti by the Kizilbashi

In 1612, a peace-treaty was concluded between Turkey and Iran. According to the terms of this treaty the frontiers established in 1555 were to be restored. Iran was to give 200 packs of silk to Turkey annually. Shah-Abbas used the peace to strengthen his domination in Kartli and Kakheti. His first target was Kakheti.

Having ascended the throne in Kakheti, Teimuraz I tried to carry out the policy independent of the Shah. He seems to have been trying to restore the broken relations with Russia. At the same time he came into contact with Luarsab II in order that they should act together. In the created situation, Shah-Abbas made hurried steps to destroy Georgia, for Russia had gradually settled the complicated home and foreign affairs, and he was afraid lest this Christian country, the ally and protector of Kakheti, should again appear in the Caucasian arena. He first got hold of Teimuraz's young children and mother, Queen Ketevan, treacherously, then with demagogic promises won influential noblemen over to his side, and in 1614, almost without fighting, occupied his kingdom. Having no more supporters, Teimuraz was compelled to go to Kartli with his suite. He was joined by Luarsab in Kartli. It was found out that neither the high nobility of Kartli supported the idea of fighting against Iran. Therefore both kings found refuge in Imereti.



Having entered Kakheti, the Kizilbashi acted cautiously at first and pretended to be friendly to the Kakhetian population. After Teimuraz had left the country, they started pillaging and sacking the country, especially Ertso-Tianeti, for the population of that region had faithfully supported Teimuraz. They deported over 30000 people from their country to Iran. The Kizilbashi violated the churches and monasteries of Kakheti, caught hold and carried away the state exchequer, plundered prosperous villages and towns. It became clear to everybody what Shah-Abbas' real intention was, and what awaited the country, therefore the Kakheti population rallied unanimously against the enemy, even the Kakheti feudal lords who had been in the service of the Shah, this time turned out to be at the head of this movement. The insurrection broke out in September of 1615.

Teimuraz returned to Kakheti immediately and headed these liberating battles. The Kakhetians under the leadership of Teimuraz inflicted a crushing defeat on the 15000-men Kizilbashi army, sent by Shah-Abbas, and began to get ready for repulsing the attacks of the fresh forces of the enemy.

Shah-Abbas was infuriated when he heard of the destruction of his army and advanced on Georgia with an enormous army in the early spring of 1616. He entered Kartli first. He appointed Bagrat-Khan, the son of Daud-Khan, ruler of Kartli. From there he moved to Kakheti and began to destroy it methodically. The Kizilbashi invaded Kakheti from two sides. Shah-Abbas himself fought against her from Kartli. The Kizilbashi had closed the roads from that side, obeying his order. Teimuraz I with his suite managed to break through this siege and went to Imereti again. As for the Kakheti population, they continued to take part in this unequal fight. The second army of the Iranians invaded Kakheti from the east, from Shirvan. The fight was long and ruthless. The population defended their homesteads, villages and towns courageously. It was the population of the town of Dzegami that put up the fiercest resistance to the enemy. But the forces were unequal. The Kizilbashi plundered and destroyed this most prosperous town of Kakheti. The Persian historian, Iskander Munsh, writes, "They did not even leave the trace of the population". And indeed, even the ruins of this town cannot be found today. Such was the fate of many towns and villages of Kakheti. Shah-Abbas' troops devastated, destroyed, burned houses, churches, fortresses-everything they came across on their way. He ordered to cut down fruit-trees and vineyards, dug out mulberry trees. They turned a great part of the flourishing country into ruins. The Persian historian himself says, "Such massacre and raid, taking people prisoner, the destruction of the country and sacking of houses and dwelling-places that befell the Christians of Kakheti has not been heard of since the birth of Islam to this day, that such a thing should have happened to them from any king of the Islamic countries and their fatherland should have been raided in such a way. The number of casualties was more than 60-70 thousand..." The same author writes that the captives whose majority consisted of "girls as beautiful as Zuleika," beardless lads and children that were marched before his majesty the Shah, were said to have been over 100000, but in the opinion of the writer of these lines there were 30000 more, captured in other parts of the country, that had not been counted because of lack of time.

The Kizilbashi, loaded with captives and booty, left Kakheti, turned to ruins, the summer of the same year. The Shah was informed that the Osmanli army was preparing to invade Iran, and was already at the approaches to Erzurum. The Shah of Iran persuaded the Osmanli commander to agree on armistice and turned his attention to Kakheti again. He



prepared new troops and sent them to Kakheti, under the leadership of his son-in-law Isa-Khan Qorchibashi. This third invasion aimed at the exterminating of remaining Kakhétians and the final destruction of the country.

In the early spring of 1617, Shah-Abbas invaded Kakheti for the fourth time. By that time the survived and dispersed Kakhétians had returned to their devastated villages. A great part of the Kiziki population had taken refuge in Khornabuji fortress. The Kizilbashi besieged the fortress and took all of them prisoner. They raided Kakheti once more, especially Kiziki. Wherever they saw a living human being, they either killed or took him/her prisoner.

Shah-Abbas divided Kakheti into two parts, giving the eastern part of the Iori to Peikar-Khan, ruler of Ganja, and the western part to Bagrat-Khan, ruler of Kartli. The purpose of this act was to root out the name Kakheti. The Shah ordered to settle Turcomans in the deserted Kakheti.

Because of this bloody Shah's invasions, Kakheti lost two thirds of her population. 100000 were killed in the fights against the enemy; over 200000 were deported to Iran. Their descendants still live in Phereidan, they have preserved their native Georgian language and the memory of their faraway native land.

Shah-Abbas tried to reach several aims by these "steps." The Kakhétians, deported to Iran would assist reviving Iran's economics by inculcating intensive farming. As for the Turcomans, settled in Kakheti, they would be loyal to the Shah and his steady support. What is more, by destroying Kakheti Georgia's strength of resistance would be broken, and like Kakheti, Kartli would also be turned into one of the Kizilbashi provinces. However, these aims of the powerful shah were not destined to be successful, for the Georgian people frustrated all these plans by their heroic struggle. A prominent part in these fights and the further development of events was played by Giorgi Saakadze, "Great Mouravi" or prefect of Kartli.

Giorgi Saakadze

Giorgi Saakadze belonged to the stratum of the king's aznauris (noblemen) by origin. A great part of the aznauris was vassals of tavads in the 16th, 17th century Kartli. A small part remained the aznauris of the king. The tavads greatly oppressed the aznauris. This was the reason that the aznauris were greatly interested in making the king more powerful and restricting the tavads' rights. The success and well-being of the king's aznauris depended on the power of the king. Hence, one can understand Giorgi Saakadze's endeavor to restrict the unruliness of the tavads and to strengthen the king's power. It can also be understood why the Kartli tavads were such implacable enemies of Giorgi Saakadze.

Giorgi Saakadze appeared in the historical arena of Kartli in 1609 when the Georgians defeated the Turk-Osmanlis' raiding army under his leadership.

He was an official prefect of Tbilisi, but practically he took part in governing the whole Kartli, being the closest person to the King and his counselor. Therefore he was mostly called "Didi Mouravi" (Great prefect) or the mouravi of Kartli. Giorgi Saakadze subjugated the mountain peoples-the Dvals, the Ossets to the King. They had rebelled



against the King some time before. For this, the King made him Mouravi of the town of Tskhinvali and Dvaleti as well. He suppressed the feudal anarchy by taking various steps and established a comparative order in the country. He paid special attention to the economic development of the country, the increase of the population and the return of the peasantry to their households that they had left during the hard times. He tried to put the relations between masters and serfs in order, so that the peasant might have a wish to practice intensive economy. Of course, such steps were taken at the expense of restricting the unruliness of tavads, and this resulted in their discontent. It was the great tavads who particularly disliked Giorgi Saakadze's consecutive aspiration to strengthen the king's power.

In 1611, Luarsab II married Giorgi's sister. This fact irritated the high nobility even more. The aznauri's daughter, made a queen, was unbearable for them. Conspiracy was organized against Giorgi Saakadze, headed by Shadiman Baratashvili and Parsadan Tsitsishvili. By false accusations and various rumors, they convinced the young king of Saakadze's treachery and made him sentence Saakadze to death without investigating the case. Giorgi Saakadze was compelled to look for refuge in Iran.

Shah-Abbas received the Mouravi, driven out of Kartli, with great honor and tried to use him for realizing his plans. Giorgi Saakadze adopted Islam and became a faithful servant of the Shah. Soon he became famous. He took part in Iran's wars against India, showed himself in the battle for Kandahar. He also fought in the war of Iran against Turkey and made a name for himself while taking Bagdad. His heroism was praised by poets, songs in his honor were sung in the Shah's palace and the streets of Ispahan.

Giorgi Saakadze accompanied Shah-Abbas in his war against Georgia in 1614. He returned to his estate and began to restore his devastated domain. His enemy tavads feared lest he should take a revenge on them with the help of the Shah. Being frightened, his enemies – Shadiman Baratashvili, Parsadan Tsitsishvili, and Beruka Javakhishvili presented themselves before the Shah and offered him their services. The Shah received them well and promised them favors. Shadiman Baratashvili promised the Shah that he would bring King Luarsab back from Imereti.

Luarsab with Teimuraz had found refuge at the Court of the King of Imereti. King Luarsab knew very well if he did not do what the Shah wanted the latter would sack his country mercilessly, in the same way as he had destroyed Kakheti. Therefore, Luarsab presented himself before Shah-Abbas. The Shah took him to Iran and demanded that he should embrace Islam. Luarsab was firm in his decision not to recant. Neither threats nor false kindness made him change his mind. The selfless king of Kartli was locked in the prison of Gulabi where later on (1622) he was strangled with a bowstring. The Georgian Church declared Luarsab II a saint.

Shah-Abbas appointed Bagrat-Khan who had embraced Islam ruler of Kartli. Bagrat-Khan was the son of Daud-Khan; he had become a real Persian and Kizilbashi. He did not know the situation in Georgia well, and it was the reason he could not cope with ruling the country. In fact, the high nobility of Kartli did not obey him. At the same time, Teimuraz, having found refuge in Imereti, was very active. He asked Turkey for help several times, sent envoys to Russia. The alarmed Shah took a revenge on innocent hostages, Teimuraz's sons, Levan and Alexandre—they were tortured terribly (1620).



Bagrat-Khan died in 1619 and the Shah appointed his son, Simon-Khan, ruler of Kartli. The young Simon-Khan was unable to rule over turbulent Kartli; therefore, the Shah sent an army and Giorgi Saakadze to help him.

Giorgi Saakadze had long before understood that the ruler of Iran would not assist him to realize his aims, that on the contrary, he was the worst enemy of the Georgian people. This terrible Shah would destroy Georgia to make his country more powerful and bigger, and to strengthen his own power. The tavads of Kartli, blinded by their own aggrandizement, assisted the Shah to realize his plans. Very cautious and prudent actions were to be taken. Giorgi forgot the great insult he had suffered and tried to get reconciled with the tavads of Kartli. It was necessary for consolidating the forces of the country.

Having arrived in Kartli, Simon-Khan came wholly under the influence of Giorgi Saakadze, and the latter became the factual ruler of Kartli. Great Mouravi used his influence for the preparation of an insurrection in the first place.

Shah-Abbas received very alarming information from Georgia. The ruler of Kakheti, Peikar-Khan, informed him that the population in Kakheti had increased. The well-known commander and the indefatigable fighter for liberty, David Jandieri, had returned and begun getting ready for an uprising. Kartli also was bracing herself clandestinely to rise against Iran. The Shah knew very well what correspondence was carried out by the Georgian politicians with the Russian Royal Court. As for Russia, she was trying to convince the Shah by diplomatic measures that he should not oppress Christian Georgia. Verbally the Shah of Iran assured the Russian King of his friendship and said that "for the love of his Royal Majesty he would not wage war against Iveria" but in reality he took decisive measures to raze Kartli and Kakheti to the ground.

Shah-Abbas did not like the mediation of the King of Russia about returning queen Ketevan who was a captive at his Court, to Georgia. He categorically demanded that the Georgian Queen should embrace Islam, but having received an adamant refusal, he ordered to torture her publicly on September 12, 1624. Flesh was torn from her body with iron pincers and she was branded with red-hot-irons. The Queen's strength and her devotion to her faith produced an opposite result for Shah-Abbas. The Queen's martyrdom did not break the people spiritually and did not frighten them, on the contrary, it consolidated them and rallied them against the Kizilbashi. The story of Ketevan's martyrdom spread all over the world of those days. The scenes describing her torture were even painted on the walls of "A Grassa" monastery in the far-away Lisbon.

The Battles of Martkopi and Marabda

At the end of the year, 1624 Shah-Abbas summoned Giorgi Saakadze and his brother-in-law, the most powerful nobleman, Zurab, the Aragvi eristavi, to Iran. The Shah of Iran had prepared a numerous army to send to Georgia which was to completely destroy Kartli and Kakheti, massacring or deporting the population to Iran. This order was to be carried out by the Shah's commander-in-chief, Karchikha-Khan. Giorgi Saakadze was appointed his counselor, though the cautious and treacherous Shah did not wholly trust the Mouravi and left his younger son Paata at his court as a hostage.

The Kizilbashi army, consisting of 60000 men-at-arms, entered Kartli in the early spring of 1625 and made a camp in the Mukhrani valley. It was decided to invite Kakheti



aznauris to that place and assassinate them treacherously, but this plan of the Kizilbashi failed. Somebody had warned the Kakhetians of the expected danger. Karchikha-Khan suspected Giorgi Saakadze of this and informed the Shah about it. The Shah sent an order to kill Giorgi Saakadze, and to begin the deportation of the Kartli population at once. This order somehow fell into Giorgi Saakadze's hands and it did him a good service in persuading the Kartli tavads to organize an uprising. At that time a great part of the Kizilbashi army was encamped in the Martkopi Valley, at the frontier of Kartli and Kakheti. All the commanders, and Giorgi Saakadze himself with his four guards, were there. Among them was Giorgi's eldest son, Avtandil.

As they had agreed it was Zurab Eristavi who was to launch the offensive on the enemy camp, and as for Giorgi Saakadze, he would act inside the enemy camp. Annunciation Day (25 March, 7 April according to the new style) was breaking. The detachments of the insurgent Georgians cautiously approached the sleeping camp. When the alarm was given Giorgi Saakadze with his guards presented himself in the tent of the commander-in-chief. The other Iranian commanders were there too, and there in front of the Kizilbashi commanders, and the army, ready to fight, Giorgi Saakadze thrust a spear into the heart of the Karchikha-Khan, who was mounting a horse. Saakadze's companions-in-arms attacked the commanders. At the same time the insurgent Georgians, commanded by Zurab Eristavi, attacked the confused army, left without a commander, and ruthlessly destroyed the Kizilbashi troops. Fighting lasted the whole day. Only 3000 men saved themselves by fleeing.

The Great Mouravi did not let the enemy take a breath. He attacked Tbilisi, occupied the city and besieged the fortress. Simon-Khan fled from the country. Saakadze, together with Zurab, moved to Kakheti and pursued Peikar-Khan. Kakheti was completely cleared from the Turcomans who had settled down there. From there Saakadze attacked the troops, stationed in Ganja-Karabagh and defeated them crushingly. The victorious Georgians asked Teimuraz to be the king of Kartli and Kakheti. Hearing about the insurrection in Kartli and Kakheti, Shah-Abbas was horrified. He had not suffered such a defeat anywhere. The infuriated Shah-Abbas ordered to cut off Paata's head (Paata was Saakadze's son) and send it to his "traitor" father... Shah-Abbas prepared a new army, put Isa-Khan-Korchibashi at its head and sent them to Georgia. The Iranians' army entered Georgia at the end of June of the same year, 1625, and encamped in the Marabda Valley, in Algeti Gorge; the Georgians' 20000- men army was encamped at Kojori and Tabakhmela.

At the meeting of the council before the battle, the tavads did their best not to let Saakadze be the commander of the army. The ambitious Teimuraz became commander-in-chief. The feudal lords did not accept the plan of the battle, proposed by Saakadze, either. Great Mouravi took into consideration that the enemy was more numerous, that their armament was much better, and they were accustomed to fighting in open places and in great heat, and insisted that they should wait for the attack on the part of the Kizilbashi and lure the enemy into narrow ravines where the enemy would be unable to spread all their forces and use their artillery freely. It was quite a justified and clever plan, but the feudal lords, and especially the Baratashvilis, demanded beginning fighting against the enemy immediately.



It was decided to begin fighting against the enemy the very next day. The army of the Georgians descended to the Marabda Valley the same night and were arrayed ready for the battle.

The battle in the Marabda Valley took place on July 1, 1625. In spite of the extraordinary valor of the Georgian army and the initial success, the fight ended in the Georgian's defeat. The fate of the battle was decided by the great number of the enemy, the absence of discipline in the feudal troops and a comparatively bad armament of the latter. Saakadze's warning was justified too.

The enemy paid dearly for the "victory" in the Marabda Valley. The Kizilbashi left 14000 killed soldiers in the battlefield; as for the Georgians, 9000 were killed. The peasantry was especially damaged. They had no horses and did not have a chance of leaving the battlefield in time.

The retreating Georgians resisted the enemy in Kojori-Tabakhmela ravines for ten days and did not let them invade the centre of the country, thus giving the peaceful population a chance of leaving their dwelling-places and finding refuge. In one of such attacks, Saakadze demonstrated fantastic heroism. He together with his sixty men slaughtered 700 enemy soldiers. Guerilla fights began in the whole of Kartli which were organized and led by Giorgi Saakadze. In one of the battles in Ksani Gorge, he exterminated 1200 Kizilbashi.

The enemy still managed to occupy Tbilisi and its environs, but they had suffered so much loss that they were unable to fulfil the Shah's main order to raze Kartli and Kakheti to the ground. Saakadze was compelled to go first to Samtskhe and then to Imereti with his retinue. The King of Imereti received him in Kutaisi with great honor and promised to help him in the fight against the Kizilbashi.

The Bazaleti Battle and Giorgi Saakadze's Death

Shah-Abbas' treacherous plans having been frustrated, he changed his policy and tried to cause cleavage among the Georgians. The danger of Georgia's complete destruction having been more or less averted, the Kartli tavads decided to be reconciled with the Shah. The Shah himself began to conduct negotiations with Teimuraz. He promised to recognize him as king if he got rid of Giorgi Saakadze, the leader of the Georgians' liberation movement.

In the spring of 1626, Saakadze returned to Kartli with his supporters and resumed fighting against the Kizilbashi. The situation had essentially changed in Kartli during his absence. Many feudal lords were on the side of the enemy, among them his brothers-in-law Zurab and Iase, the eristavi of Ksani. There was chaos and anarchy in Kartli. Saakadze did not retreat and tried to win these powerful feudal lords over to his side. As for those whom he could not trust, he began an implacable fight against them. He occupied the fortress of Gori and cleared a great part of Kartli from the Kizilbashi. It was Teimuraz I who was still king of Kartli and Kakheti, but practically the country was governed by the Great Mouravi. Foreigners considered him to be the ruler of the country and sent their ambassadors to him. The ambitious and jealous Teimuraz did not like it and soon they began to distrust each other and became enemies. The high nobility of Kartli assisted this



situation as much as they could. Zurab Eristavi again found himself in the camp of Saakadze's adversaries, his predatory appetite having been curbed by the Great Mouravi. The Persian historian Iskander Munshi pointed out that "one group of noblemen and tavads were of a higher rank than he (Saakadze) was, they hated his domination and leadership." In this situation, Giorgi Saakadze addressed the King of Imereti, Giorgi, and decided to make his heir King of Eastern Georgia. This would unite the whole Georgia and Saakadze's dream would come true. The war between the supporters of Teimuraz and Saakadze became unavoidable.

In the late autumn of 1626, the battle between Giorgi Saakadze and Teimuraz I took place at Lake Bazaleti. Giorgi Saakadze was defeated and compelled to look for refuge for himself and his supporters in Turkey. It was the final failure of Saakadze's aspirations and ideas. The great cause to which Saakadze had devoted all his boundless energy and without which it was impossible to achieve Georgia's unification was lost.

The Sultan received Giorgi Saakadze with great honor, as he was an implacable fighter against the Shah, and gave him one of the largest provinces-Karamania, i.e. Iconia Region, to rule. He again embraced Islam and made a great name for himself. Giorgi Saakadze took part in many battles against Iran and won a great victory too, but his dream was to return to Georgia and realize his dream. In the end, he became convinced that Turkey and her forces would do him no good. After the death of Shah-Abbas (January 1629) the situation at the court of Iran changed, and there Khorso-Mirza, promoted by and indebted to Giorgi Saakadze, played the first fiddle. New prospects seemed to appear before him by returning to Georgia. But his intentions were guessed and he was arrested. The great vizier of Turkey, Khusrav-Pasha, who envied and hated Giorgi Saakadze, put him to death for this reason.

Teimuraz I, King of Kartli and Kakheti

Having driven Giorgi Saakadze out of Georgia, Zurab Eristavi became very powerful. He did not obey Teimuraz and tried to put forward Simon-Khan. However, Teimuraz managed to win Zurab Eristavi over to his side and made him kill Simon-Khan treacherously in 1630, and later on he got rid of Zurab himself too. By killing Zurab he justified himself before the Shah's court and was given the title of the king of Kartli and Kakheti (on May 14, 1631).

Teimuraz joined a great conspiracy against the new shah of Iran. As early as in 1626-1628, he sent his ambassador Nikoloz Cholokashvili to Western Europe (he was known as Nikiphoros Irbakh in Europe). His mission was to establish certain political contacts with the King of Spain, Philip IV and Roman Pope, Urban VIII. At that time, Spain herself was interested in such a contact. Iran had taken the island of Ormuz away from Portugal (Portugal was part of Spain from 1581 to 1663) and continued fighting to drive Spain away from the Persian Gulf.

After the death of Shah-Abbas I (January 1629) two parties of Georgians opposed themselves at the Court of the Shah of Iran. Before that, the sons of Alaverdi-Khan Undiladze, brothers Undiladzes, had had great influence at the Court. Daud-Khan Undiladze was Beglar-Beg of Ganja-Karabagh and had a close relationship with Teimuraz I, and his



brother, Imam Kuli-Khan Undiladze, was the ruler of Pharsi and other important provinces, and also kularagassi of the army whom the European sources called "vice-king" of South-Eastern Iran. In their family was brought up Shah-Abbas' son whom the Undiladzes tried to make Shah, but in 1629, Shah-Abbas' grandson, Semi-Mirza was raised to the throne. He took the name of Shah-Safi I. a great part in his being made a shah was played by the Georgian prince Kaikhosro, i.e. Khosro-Mirza, the illegitimate son of Daud-Khan, the brother of Simon I. He had the post of Ispahan Tarugha. After this Khosro-Mirza became a very influential person at the Shah's court. Shah-Safi I intended to make him king of Kartli. All this strained the relations between the Undiladzes and Khosro-Mirza. The Shah of Iran did not like the excessive aggrandizement of the Undiladzes either, and he decided to overthrow them. First, they insulted Daud-Khan and drove him out of the Mejlis (parliament). Daud-Khan found refuge in Kakheti at Teimuraz's court. After this, Teimuraz and Daud-Khan began to act against Iran together. In 1632 Teimuraz, helped by the Imereti army sacked Ganja-Karabagh. In December of the same year, the Armenians, led by the Armenian Catholicos of Gandzasari, joined the Georgian army. Teimuraz and Daud-Khan addressed other emirs of Iran and asked them to oppose Shah-Safi and raise the legitimate heir to the throne, the son of Shah-Abbas, the foster son of Imamkuli-Khan who lived at his court at that time. Shah-Safi learned about it. Apart from this, Kartli tavads, displeased with Teimuraz, clandestinely informed the Shah of the following, "If you want to take possession of Georgia, you must get rid of Imamkuli-Khan of Shiraz, for all the Georgians turn their eyes towards him with hope." Imamkuli-Khan was arrested and executed publicly. Shah-Safi wanted to catch hold of Daud-Khan as well, but Teimuraz did not give him away. The infuriated Shah-Safi declared Teimuraz dethroned and sent Khosro-Mirza to rule over Kartli. As a token of great respect for him his name was changed and he was called Rostom-Khan.*

In February 1633, Rostom-Khan with a large army of the Kizilbashi in which there were very many Georgians that had found refuge in Iran and adopted Islam entered Kartli. A great majority of Kartli tavads did not take Teimuraz's side, and he was compelled to move to Imereti. The Kizilbashi occupied Kartli and Kakheti.

Rostom-Khan's Rule

Rostom started to establish order in Kartli and strengthen his rule. He managed to do it with the help of the Kizilbashi army and severely punished the noblemen that opposed him. He had Datuna the Aragvi Eristavi killed, though he was unable to subjugate his domain-Saeristavo. Datuna's brother Zaal became the Aragvi Eristavi. In 1624, Zaal Eristavi, together with other noblemen opponents of Rostom, again invited Teimuraz to rule over Kartli and Kakheti. King Teimuraz with his army reached Aragvi Gorge via Dvaleti, but he was unable to occupy Kartli. He went to Kakheti, drove away the Kizilbashi ruler Selim-Khan, and took possession of the country, belonging to him by inheritance, again. Having done it, he fought against Rostom for some more time, but the latter received reinforcement from Azerbaijan and Teimuraz was compelled to get

* Rostom is one of the main characters of the well-known Persian epos "Shah-Name". His name in Iran was a symbol of heroism and courage.



reconciled with him. The Shah of Iran also sent him "A thousand tumans of tetri and one thousand tumans worth khalats (a piece of man's clothing in the East)", and recognized him as King of Kakheti.

And yet the situation was not stable. Teimuraz fought against Rostom with all the means he could use. He even turned to Russia, asking for help. In 1638, numerous ambassadors arrived in Kakheti from Russia, but instead of military aid, they brought only articles used in church, and a device necessary for painting churches. They also brought the text of agreement that Teimuraz was to renew. After long negotiations Teimuraz signed this new agreement on April 23 rd, 1639, and by kissing the cross, confirmed his loyalty to the tsar of Russia. The contents of the agreement were identical with the previous one, received by Alexander II, but it did not do any real good to the king of Kakheti.

In 1639, Iran and Turkey concluded a peace-treaty, according to whose terms Eastern Georgia was given to Iran, and Western Georgia with Samtskhe to Turkey. While Western Georgia considered herself to be only a vassal of Turkey, Samtskhe would be included into Turkey as part of its state, and there Turkish administrative rule and social-economic system would be established. After this, Iran would not be able to express any claims on this part of Georgia. This peace-treaty remained intact until 1723.

Rostom-Khan gradually strengthened his power in Kartli. Quite a few conspiracies were arranged against him, but he managed to win the influential lords, supporters of Teimuraz, over to his side by a number of concessions and merciful attitude, Zaal Aragvi Eristavi, Iotam Amilakhvari, etc. were among them. These feudal lords were sent to Iran, to the Shah's court where they were received with great honor, given many presents and were made to adopt Islam. Teimuraz gradually lost supporters in Kartli. Finally, in 1648 Rostom, with the armies of the Kizilbashi and the Kartli tavads entered Kakheti and inflicted a crushing defeat on Teimuraz in the battle near Tianeti. Another army of the Kizilbashi invaded Kiziki. There Teimuraz's son David (Datuna) led the Kakhetians' army. The Kizilbashi also defeated this army, and Teimuraz's only heir, Datuna, was killed in this battle. The only thing Teimuraz could do was to ask Rostom-Khan for pardon. Rostom expressed great mercy towards him. He sent even horses and mules to enable him to move to Imereti, and sent Cathalicos Kristephore to accompany him. The king of Kakheti found refuge at his brother-in-law's, King Alexandre III. Being very pleased with Teimuraz's leaving Kakheti; the Shah gave it to rule to Rostom-Khan as well. After this peace was established in Kartli and Kakheti that was so necessary for the economic development of the country.

Rostom-Kahn's final victory was conditioned by the fact that he had not declared war on the so-called Georgian phenomenon, i.e. the Georgian social-economic system. The steps taken by him had not touched the social and economic system. Everything in this sphere remained unchanged. He had only reformed the state government apparatus in the Kizilbashi manner, changing the Georgian names of officials by Persian ones.

In spite of the increasing of Persian-Kizilbashi influence, some positive changes can also be noticed in the Kingdom of Kartli. To begin with, the Kizilbashi raids in the country had ceased. This caused creating favorable conditions for the development of the country's economy. The government of King Rostom assisted the country's economic development, the development of trade and artisanship. In those days roads were laid, caravanserais,



bridges were built, the roads were put in order, the city life was revived, new towns were also built, a new bridge was built on the river Khrami ("Red Bridge"), the trade with the towns of Iran became animated. The trade with Western Europe was restored as well.

Tbilisi was the city, which particularly flourished in that period. Its population had already reached 20000 people. Other comparatively smaller towns also reached a certain level of development.

The Kizilbashi garrisons were stationed in the fortresses of Kartli (Tbilisi, Gori, Surami, etc.). Vali (the representative of the shah) was to be a Mohammedan. As for Rostom, he was treated with special respect in Iran, and was a great authority. In Georgia he was called a king traditionally.

The very first year of his becoming a king Rostom married Mariam, the daughter of the prince of Samegrelo, Levan II Dadiani. This marriage had a certain political meaning. Viz, in this way this aggrandized prince got into contact with Iran. The Shah of Iran sent him 50000 marchili (Persian money in use in those days) which Rostom brought to the Prince, besides; he paid him a salary of 2000 tumans annually. These contacts with Rostom-Khan and Iran greatly assisted Levan II Dadiani in becoming more powerful.

Queen Mariam took an active part in ruling the country. She, being a Christian, took great care of the Christian Church; she was the patron of the Georgian culture, did her best to restore the destroyed churches and monasteries. It was she who ordered to copy "The history of Kartli" ("Kartlis Tskhovreba"). She did not have a child by Rostom; therefore the question of the heir to the throne became very acute in the last years of Rostom's reign. Rostom who had reached the age of 90 was unable to govern the country, so he adopted a representative of the side branch of the Bagrationis Vakhtang Mukhranbatoni as a son and sent him to the Shah's court to be confirmed as his heir. Vakhtang was made to embrace Islam there, and was given the name of Shah-Navaz. Rostom-Khan died in 1658. He was taken to Iran, to Kum, to be buried, and Vakhtang V (Shah Navaz) was sent to be King of Kartli.

Revolt in Kakheti in 1660

Teimuraz, having found refuge in Imereti, had not stopped fighting. He tried to unite the kings and princes of Western Georgia, to begin a new liberating war against Iran with joint forces. He cherished great hopes on the aid of Russia. In 1649, Teimuraz persuaded King Alexandre III of Imereti to send ambassadors together to Russia. In 1651, King Alexandre swore an oath of allegiance to Russia, but it did not do any good to the Georgian side, on the contrary, the Shah of Iran was greatly vexed by the fact that Russia interfered in the affairs of the Caucasus and did his best to prevent Russia's entering Transcaucasia. The Shah was particularly alarmed by the information that King Teimuraz sent his grandson, prince Irakli, to Russia in 1653. He feared lest Moscow should try to make this prince king of Kakheti. Therefore, he took urgent steps.

In 1656, Rostom-Khan was deprived of the right to be ruler of Kakheti and she was given to Selim, Khan of Ganja, to rule. The Shah was going to turn Kakheti into a Kizilbashi country. The Georgian politicians and especially Teimuraz were well aware of this danger. The Kakheti population also felt this danger. Even the feudal lords who had embraced



Islam and had taken the side of the Kizilbashi opposed this intention of the shah and began preparing for resisting it with joint forces.

The mountainous part of Kakheti was the most active in the created situation. The Uplands were an organic part of Kakheti and they were closely connected with the plains. Here, in the mountains, the population of the plains found refuge when they suffered from the invasions of the enemy. The mountain region presented an inaccessible stronghold where the forces got together, and where the offensive to drive the enemy away started. The mountain region was an inexhaustible reserve for the plains. Sometimes the lowlands of Kakheti, quite devastated and deserted, would be again repopulated and restored. On its part, the mountain region was also vitally interested in the close contact with the lowlands. The severe nature of the mountains did not give enough food products for the local population. The mountain people brought the necessary provisions from the plains. The winter pastures of the Tushis, Pshavs and Khevsurs' sheep were also situated in the lowlands of Kakheti. The proud mountain people could not be indifferent to the enemy's loathsome behavior and customs either. That was the reason that the mountain people played the main part in the fight for liberating Kakheti.

In 1668 Teimuraz I himself arrived in Moscow. The elderly King proposed a bold plan to the Russian Royal Court, but Russia did not accept it. In the same period, the Shah's ambassador Dakul Sultan arrived in Moscow. He was sent by the Shah to reconnoiter the situation. Having found out that Russia did not intend to render any substantial help to Georgia at that time, they decided to act at once and began to take suitable measures.

Shah-Abbas II issued an order to settle the nomadic Turcoman tribes in Kakheti, and turn this recalcitrant country into a Kizilbashi Mohammedan khanate. After this Russia would not have a reason to declare herself protector of this country.

Unprecedented hard times set in for Kakheti. The Turcomans gradually occupied the fertile valleys of the Iori and Alazani, built or fortified fortresses where they stationed the Kizilbashi garrisons. They specially fortified Bakhtrioni stronghold. The foe turned the well-known Alaverdi Cathedral into a stronghold too.

The Turcomans brought to Kakheti were supposed to stay there for good. Lands were taken away from Kakheti tavads and aznaurs. Only those who presented themselves before the Shah received land from him according to the Persian custom of grace. The Georgian feudal lord would lose the right to own the land, he would become a temporary owner of the land, as was the Kizilbashi custom, at best; the intensive economy would not exist any more and the branches of farming would be degraded in the hands of uncivilized Turcomans. All this soon became obvious. The Turcomans, as a rule, cut down orchards and vineyards, destroyed cultured plants. They preferred to have kishlak pastures to the places occupied with complex branches of economy.

Uncivilized Turcomans caused general indignation with their impudent behavior. Thus, there were more than enough reasons for insurrection. Putting up with a created situation meant the final subjugation of both Kartli and Kakheti and turning the population into the Kizilbashi. This would have been the beginning of the Georgian people's national degradation and social deterioration.

However, the Georgian people showed the strength of their vitality by their fierce revolt once more. In 1660, the insurrection of the people broke out, and frustrated the enemy's treacherous intention that very summer.



Zaal, Aragvi Eristavi, was considered to be the head of the insurrection. He was thought to be loyal to the Persians. He had even been appointed counselor of the ruling Khans of Kakheti, but due to his position, he saw the enemy's intentions and the disastrous results of the Persians' domination better than anybody else. Shalva and Elizbar, the Eristavs of Ksani joined him. The advanced circles of Kartli seem to have known that establishing the Kizilbashi system in Kakheti meant spreading the same system in Kartli. In spite of the fact that Kartli and Kakheti were politically separated, Kartli took an active part in driving the Turcomans out of Kakheti. Kakheti insurrection was inspired and prepared by the king's personal steward-Bidzina Cholokashvili.

The enemy did not expect the insurrection. Zurab, the son of Zaal, the Aragvi Eristavi, Bidzina Cholokashvili and Shalva and Elizbar Eristavis, personally headed the insurgents. The Georgians attacked the Turcomans, relying on their multiplicity, from several places simultaneously. One part of the insurgents attacked the stronghold of Bakhtrioni, where a considerable force of the Persians was gathered. Another group attacked the Turcomans, fortified in Alaverdi.

The decisive battle of the rebels decided the fate of the enemy. They were crushingly defeated. The horrified Turcomans fled from Kakheti. Kakheti was wholly cleared of the nomads.

It is true, that the Georgians did not manage to drive the Persians away for good, but the conqueror was compelled to retreat, and give up his intention to turn Georgia into a Kizilbashi country. It was a great victory of the Georgian spirit.

The enemy was enraged, but he was unable to resume his frustrated plan. The Shah could not send Kizilbashi officials to govern the country and gave the country to rule to Vakhtang V, ruler of Kartli. It is true that Vakhtang had embraced Islam and was dependent on the Shah, but this meant that the country was not threatened by losing her nationality. Vakhtang had to annex Kakheti by force, but it had a form of an internal conflict.

At this time, Teimuraz had returned from Russia to Imereti and, being disappointed in everything, had given up political activities. He had found abode in Skanda fortress together with his suite. There he received an invitation from Zaal, Aragvi Eristavi to return to Kakheti. Teimuraz, who had followed the insistent advice of his retinue, rejected the invitation.

The Shah of Iran was collecting troops in Azerbaijan and was threatening with a new war. The leaders of the insurrection-Bidzina Cholokashvili, Shalva and Elizbar Ksani eristavis presented themselves before the Shah of their own free will with the purpose of saving their country from a new devastating invasion of the enemy. The Shah handed them over to the fellow men of the exterminated Turcomans who slew the heroes, devoted to their country, with torture. The Georgian Church declared Bidzina Cholokashvili, Shalva and Elizbar Ksani Eristavis saints. Shah Navaz managed to capture Teimuraz as well. In 1660, the King of Kartli entered Imereti and besieged the fortress of Skanda. The sick King Teimuraz surrendered to him without fighting, and asked him to let him go to the Shah's court. The king, that had been an implacable fighter against the Kizilbashi up to that period was taken to Tbilisi and sent to Iran from there. Teimuraz's going to Iran as well as the arrival of the leaders of Kakheti insurrection-Bidzina Cholokashvili, Shalva and Elizbar Ksani Eristavis at the Shah's court, served the purpose of rescuing the country



from new invasions. Their selflessness saved Kakheti from a new invasion of the enemy hordes.

At first Teimuraz was received at the Shah's court with great honor, but when he was asked to embrace Islam and the King refused to do it, he was locked in the fortress of Astrabad where he died in 1663. Teimuraz's body was brought to Georgia and buried in Alaverdi Cathedral.

The Kingdoms of Kartli and Kakheti at the End of the 17th Century

Vakhtang V was the first king in Kartli of the Mukhrani branch of the Bagrationi family. He was the first representative of the family that distinguished itself by many-sided and fruitful activities. He was successful at the very outset of his reign. He took advantage of the disturbances, begun after the death of King Alexandre III (1660) in Imereti, moved there with an army and defeated Vamiq Dadiani, pretender to the throne, and raised his 14-year-old son Archil to the throne of Kutaisi. After the battle of Bakhtioni, he also ruled Kakheti. Thus, he ruled more or less over the whole of Georgia (except Samtskhe). Neither Iran nor Turkey liked this strengthening of his power. The local nobility were also displeased with such a situation. At the demand of Turkey and the Shah's order Vakhtang brought Archil from Imereti in 1663 and took him to the Shah. The Shah made him embrace Islam too and appointed him King of Kakheti.

Vakhtang V vigorously attacked recalcitrant tavads, but again the Shah interfered and did not allow him to curb the unruly feudal lords. The Kings, father and son, Vakhtang V and Archil still acted vigorously. They did away with the raids of Lezghins, banned selling people abroad, and assisted the economic development of the country. They tried to enlist the services of European merchants and restore the European-Indian transit-trade road, which at one time passed through Georgia. Quite a great number of Catholic missionaries worked at the time in Georgia. European merchants also arrived.

The new Shah of Iran Suleiman (1656-1694) did not much like the successful reign of Vakhtang and Archil. He decided to oppose Teimuraz's grandson Erekle who was in Russia to them. He sent Erekle appropriate deeds and letters, promising to make him king of Georgia, if he left Russia and presented himself before him. Erekle arrived in Iran in 1675 where he was told to embrace Islam as a condition of becoming a king. Erekle categorically refused to do it.

Vakhtang V was also summoned to present himself before the Shah in 1675, but he died on the way. The Shah of Iran appointed his son Giorgi King of Kartli.

Giorgi XI (1676-1688) who was also given the name of Shah Navaz (II) after he had embraced Islam was less tolerant to the domination of Iran than his father Vakhtang V, and was clandestinely getting ready for a revolt. He intended to annex Kakheti and to drive the renegade khan, appointed by Iran, away from there. Owing to all this, the Shah made Giorgi XI leave the throne, and sent Erekle I as a king of Kartli. The latter after a long hesitation had adopted Islam.

Erekle I (1688-1703), Nazarali-Khan, had been brought up in Russia, and was not well acquainted with Georgian customs and courtesy. He could not find the common language



with the Georgian nobility from the very beginning. He decided to change some rules of governing the country, and oppressed some old families of high nobility. The Georgian society did not particularly like Erekle's using bad language. They could not put up with his rude, tactless behavior. Therefore, a great part of the Georgian tavads decided to make Giorgi XI king again. In 1691, an endless war began between these two pretenders ("orianoba"). This war ended in the fact that both pretenders arrived at the Shah's Court and sought support there. The last Safavid Shah Sultan Husein (1694-1723) sent Giorgi XI to Afghanistan as a commander and Beglar-Beg. The situation there at that time was critical. As for Erekle I, he appointed him head of his guard-kularagassi. In addition, Giorgi's nephew Vakhtang, the son of Levan became a temporary ruler of Kartli (janishini), and Erekle's eldest son David (Imamkulikhan) was sent to Kakheti.

Western Georgia in the 17th Century

The fight between the king of Imereti and the princes of Western Georgia, begun in the 16th century, became more serious in the 17th century. At this time Levan II Dadiani (1611-1657), Prince of Samegrelo, became most powerful. He spread his influence over the Principality of Guria too and defeated the Imereti King Giorgi II (1605-1639) many times. Finally, he even captured him and freed him after the latter had paid a great ransom. Levan Dadiani carried out very clever policy in regard to the Ottoman Empire and Iran. Verbally he was a vassal of the Ottoman Empire, but actually he was connected with Iran and received great help from her. As we have mentioned he married his sister, Mariam, to Kartli's Mohammedan ruler Rostom Khan and consolidated his position by this act even more.

Giorgi, King of Imereti, did not live long after he had been liberated from captivity. He died in 1639. Levan Dadiani continued raiding Western Georgia during the reign of Giorgi's successor Alexandre III (1639-1660). These raids were naturally followed by mass pillage of the population, taking them prisoner and then selling them in Turkey. This lasted till 1657, when Levan Dadiani died. After this, Alexandre, king of Imereti, attacked Samegrelo himself. He made Vamiq Lipartiani, a relative of the Dadianis, Prince of Samegrelo. He also changed the prince of Guria and appointed Demetre, the son of Svimon, Gurieli (Prince of Guria). The latter was loyal to him. Such a development of events seemed to have strengthened the power of Imereti King but Alexandre's sudden death (on March 4, 1660) changed the situation. Endless internal wars and anarchy began to reign in Western Georgia.

After Alexandre's death, his son Bagrat ascended the throne of Imereti, but the same year his stepmother, Queen Darejan, overthrew him. Darejan was the daughter of Teimuraz I. This ambitious Queen burned out the eyes of her stepson Bagrat, married a distant relative of the kings of Imereti, Vakhtang Chuchuniashvili, and declared him king.

Imereti tavads and aznaurs rose against Darejan. They asked Akhaltsikhe Pasha and King of Kartli Shah Navaz for help. The insurgents occupied Kutaisi and took Queen Darejan prisoner. Finally, the captive queen was taken away by Akhaltsikhe Pasha, and the blinded Bagrat-by Shah Navaz. The eldest son of Shah Navaz, Archil, became King of Imereti. He was king of Imereti only for two years and a half. In 1663 at the request



of the Ottoman Empire and the order of the Shah of Iran Shah Navaz brought his son back from Imereti and returned Bagrat, the son of Alexandre, to the throne of Imereti. It is certain that the blind Bagrat was unable to govern the country and maintain order in it; therefore, endless internal wars began to rage in Imereti, wars that probably hardly have an analogue anywhere.

Sometimes Gurieli sat on the throne of Imereti, at other times Dadiani or Abashidze. Even the legitimate kings of the Bagrationi family ascended the throne or lost it at the will of these most powerful princes and tavads. For instance, at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries twelve kings were put on the throne of Imereti. Three of them were killed, the rest were driven away. The Ottoman Turkey actively interfered in these affairs and strengthened her influence on Western Georgia more and more.

The Ottoman Turks had tried to settle in the ports of the Black Sea Coast as early as during the second war with Iran. They had restored the strongholds of Poti and Sukhumi and stationed their garrisons there; nevertheless, their positions there were not strong. Samtskhe was the main point where the Ottoman Empire attacked Western Georgia from. Samtskhe was ruled by the Jaqelis who had embraced Islam, bearing the titles of Akhaltsikhe Pasha or Beylerbey of Childir, and served the sultan of Turkey faithfully. They often invaded Western Georgia with an army of local Mohammedan Georgians or Turkish Askers and interfered in local affairs by force.

The Ottomans moved to Western Georgia from the north-west, from the Principality of Abkhazia.

At the beginning of the 18th century, Levan II Dadiani being under age, the princes of Abkhazia, the Sharvashidzes, managed to separate their domains from Samegrelo. The border between Samegrelo and Abkhazia was now the River Kodori. At first, Levan Dadiani tried to establish peaceful relations with the princes of Abkhazia and married the daughter of Segeman Sharvashidze, Tanunia, with this purpose, but later on he accused her of adultery, and using it as a pretext, began to wage war against Abkhazia. The purpose of these wars was subjugating Abkhazia, and he several times sacked the domains of the Sharvashidzes and exacted tribute from them. As the witness of these events, the Italian missionary Archangelo Lamberti, writes "the Abkhazians have submitted to Levan, they have undertaken paying tribute, but as these people do not have cities, and trade is not developed in their country, they do not have money and goods, the tribute they were to pay was several greyhounds, bloodhounds and falcons". It is a very remarkable characteristic! This province of Georgia that at one time had a highly developed economy and culture seems to be degraded and fallen. The reason for it, alongside other factors, was that the ethnic composition of the population on the territory of Abkhazia had changed. Due to constant inroads and incursions of Ciscaucasian mountain peoples, and endless internal wars, the local Georgian Christian population was greatly damaged. Part of them was exterminated, others were captured and sold in the slave market of Turkey, and still others left their dwelling-places and moved to other places. Mountain tribes of Adigei-Circassian origin who had a low level of social and cultural development filled the deserted territory. The communal tribal system was still dominant among them and their religion was primitive pagan.

The Georgian element was greatly oppressed on the territory of Abkhazia due to the invasion of these backward savage forces. Nevertheless, the Georgians had not given up



their positions there. In the 17th and partially 18th centuries, the feudal class in Abkhazia, including the house of the Princes Sharvashidze, remained Georgian by their both cultural identity and faith. They were actively involved in those permanent internal feudal wars, going on in the whole of Western Georgia, and which did irreparable harm to the Georgian people and the Georgian statehood.

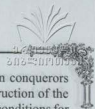
As it has been mentioned, such fights became more frequent from the 60-s of the 17th century. The princes of Abkhazia took advantage of this situation and attacked Samegrelo. They crossed the River Kodori and moved the frontiers of their principality to the River Enguri. At the end of the 17th century, the Principality of Abkhazia was divided into three parts. Prince Zegnav Sharvashidze divided the territory of the Principality among his three sons. The eldest son Rostom was given the territory between the rivers Bzyb and Kodori; another, Jikeshia- the territory between the rivers Kodori and Galidzga, and the third Quapu got the lands, taken away from Samegrelo, those between the Galidzga and Enguri. This part of the country was called Samurzaqano later on, according to the name of its owner, Murzaqan Sharvashidze. Quapu Sharvashidze settled his domain with the Abkhazians from Bzibi Gorge, but the majority of the population there were still Georgians (Megrels). After this redistribution of Abkhazia, its integrity was not restored. Separate owners of lands in Abkhazia made inroads on one another, and wars did not cease.

The princes of Abkhazia recognized the suzerainty of the King of Imereti, but this did not prevent them from fighting against one another, or making incursions on the neighboring Imereti and the territory of Samegrelo, capturing people and selling them as slaves in Turkey. The Ottomans encouraged them in this business in every way. The Ottoman Empire needed these goods in great quantities for janissaries, harems and patriarchal economy. The Turks spread their influence over the whole Black Sea littoral and Ciscaucasian tribes, especially the Abkhazian tribe of the Jikhs. They spread Islam and their influence among the population of Abkhazia from there as well. Besides, the Ottoman garrison was stationed in the stronghold of Sukhumi too, and this helped to spread the Ottoman Empire's influence on the territory of Abkhazia.

The Abkhazian population resisted the domination of the Ottomans and often rose and fought against them.

The Social-Economic Situation of the Georgian Kingdoms and Principalities in the 16th and 17th centuries

Unlike other Georgian kingdoms and principalities peace reigned in Kakheti in the 16th century. That is why farming, trade, and artisanship were fast developing there. The number of population had also grown considerably. New towns (Gremi, Dzegami) were built; trade with foreign countries began to flourish. Silk, nuts, the plant, giving alizarin, horses, wine were exported. Construction works were also widely spread. Palaces, strongholds, churches and monasteries were built. Old buildings were restored, roads, irrigation canals were constructed, etc. However, from the beginning of the 17th century, after Shah-Abbas's destructive invasions, farming in Kakheti was destroyed, trade and artisanship deteriorated, once flourishing towns and cities disappeared, and the population was sharply diminished.



As for Kartli, there incessant wars against the Kizilbashi and Ottoman conquerors were waged. The unruly internal feudal anarchy was followed by the destruction of the country, fall of economy and the decrease of the population. There were no conditions for the normal development of trade and artisanship and city-life. However, beginning with the 30-s and 40-s of the 17th century comparative peace was achieved and the results of this appeared at once. Kartli began to restore the devastated regions, the country economics began to develop, farming began to flourish; the same can be said about trade and artisanship, foreign trade with Iran and other countries. The King's Court of Kartli took special steps to restore and revive the degraded economy, special attention was paid to drawing merchants from Europe and restoring broken relationship with her. Catholic missionaries did especially great service to Kartli in this respect. At the same time European merchants, agents, ambassadors arrived together with them. There were numerous foreigners both from eastern countries, Russia and Western Europe in the cities of Georgia. Tbilisi was a particularly thriving city in the 17th century.

In this period, other towns of Kartli also reached a higher level of development. These were Gori, Surami, Ali, Tskhinvali, etc. Several steps were taken to put the tariff of excise, trade legislation in order.

The situation in Samtskhe-Saatabago and Western Georgia was especially hard in the 16th, 17th centuries. The domination of the Ottoman Turks in Samtskhe and Ajara shook the foundation of the Georgian feudal system and economics there. The conquerors exploited the population.

The natural conditions for carrying out feudal economy in Western Georgia were much less favorable than in Eastern Georgia that was the reason that the hampering of normal conditions for development produced such bad results. During the whole 16th and 17th centuries, the feudal economy in Western Georgia went downwards. Once thriving towns disappeared, the economy acquired an extremely closed natural character. The conditions of social classes of feudal Georgia undergo a change beginning with the 15th century. As we have seen, the highest and most powerful stratum detached itself from the feudal class at that time. These were princes and tavads in whose hands, alongside the kings' multiplied families, was the political power. The ecclesiastics of higher rank-cathalicoses, bishops, fathers-superior of large monasteries, mainly appointed from important feudal houses, also presented the highest stratum of the feudal class.

In a great part of Georgia of this period half independent feudal domains (seignoirities)-Satacados sprang up again. Tavads were at the head of these satacados. Such satacados in Kartli were as follows: Aragvi saeristavo, Ksani saeristavo, the Amilakhvaris' domain, the Mukhranbatonis' domain, the Tsitsishvilis', the Baratashvilis' domains, etc. In Imereti-Racha saeristavo, the satacados of the Chkeidzes, the Abashidzes, the Lortkipanidzes, etc. The same kinds of satacados were inside separate principalities. A certain hierarchy characterized these satacados. The head of this feudal domain tavad was obeyed by his kinsfolk, the representatives of the younger side branch of this house, called tavadishvilis (sons of tavads). The satacado territory was mainly undivided, with its fortresses, churches and monasteries. The families of tavadishvilis lived in different places of the satacado territory. They had their vassals, petty feudal lords-aznauris, and the tavads themselves were considered the vassals of kings, but their obedience depended on their personal caprices.



As we see, beginning with the 13th century the progressive development of the Georgian feudal society was hindered by the extremely hard political and economic conditions, created in the country. Even more can be said, regress can be noticed, the outdated, abolished, half-independent feudal domains sprang up again in the form of these satavados. The king's weakened power could not resist this regressive process. As for the system of satavados, it impeded everything progressive. Foreign conquerors also assisted the existence of the satavados. In this way, the power of the country's resistance was weakened. While the system of satavados existed, it was impossible to restore the integrity of Georgia. It was proved by the bitter reality many times. The satavados practically enjoyed full impregnability; the king was unable to interfere in their internal affairs.

The aznauris were the most numerous stratum of the feudal class. Their considerable part was in the vassalage of tavads, the rest of them served the king. Aznauris were petty and average landowners. They had received the most part of the land and serfs from their masters as "a favor" for certain service (mainly for military service) on some condition, and part of the land was their personal property (bought, received as a dowry, got in wars, etc.). The aznauri was personally free, and if he gave up the property, received from his master, he had the right to become a serf of another master. When the king's power weakened, the tavads did not recognize this right of the aznauris and were against their leaving. Apart from military service, aznauris performed various official functions at the court of their masters.

Peasant-serfs were divided into two main strata – servants and taxpayers. The servants' duty was to take part in wars, accompany their masters and do other honorable work. The duty of the other stratum of peasants was to pay taxes. Many different payments were meant by the taxes. The taxes were different in separate feudal domains and often taxes varied in a village. The main tax among them was ghala-payment in cereals, kulukhi-paid in wine, for grass-for having cattle, gifts, for standing a treat to guests and many others. The masters raised taxes regularly. For instance, peasants' taxes grew six or eight times in the 12th century, compared to those in the 15th century. Later on these taxes increased even more. Peasants paid royal and church taxes as well, also taxes in favor of foreign conquerors, etc.

The peasants, suffering from unbearable poverty, were compelled to leave their dwelling-places, run away and seek their fortune elsewhere. The number of migrants and paupers increased. Peasants often went to places where the system of master and serfs was comparatively less developed, where the communal-tribal system was still in force, and the traditions and survivals of tribal freedom still existed. Such was, for instance, Eastern Kakheti – Chari where Ciscaucasian mountain people had settled en masse, and brought their communal-tribal traditions. Peasantry ran to Abkhazia from Samegrelo where the communal-tribal ways of life were strong among the Circassian-Adigei tribes who had also come from Ciscaucasia and settled down there.

Georgian Culture in the 16th, 17th Century Georgia

Mongol domination over, the Georgian culture revived. However, beginning with the 15th century it deteriorated. One of the reasons for it was that Georgia had lost contacts with the cultured world of Western Europe and found herself surrounded by



the Kizilbashi and the Ottoman Turks. However, in spite of these hard and unfavorable conditions the Georgian feudal culture still revealed strong vitality. The reason for that was its steadfast national basis.

There were no longer higher educational scientific centers in the 16th, 17th century Georgia. Reading and writing was mainly taught in families, churches, and monasteries. In the 16th, 17th centuries, Catholic missionaries arrived in Georgia from Western Europe who founded schools in various towns of Georgia where alongside Christian-catholic teaching they taught the Italian and Latin languages and sometimes-practical sciences as well.

The Georgian society took a great interest in such sciences as geography, astronomy, medicine, history, philology, for instance. Georgian literature also showed some signs of revival. A whole cycle of sequels of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" was created. "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" remained the Georgians' most favorite book. Its ideas and ideals general for all humankind, so close to the Georgia's morale and nature, brilliant prosody and the splendid music of the Georgian word, delighted a Georgian even in the hardest times. Great popularity of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" in this period is proved by the fact that quite a great number of poets tried to fill in or continue this great work according to his taste in the 16th, 17th centuries.

Poetry always occupied a particular place in Georgian literature and a Georgian man's life in general. King Teimuraz I was a brilliant poet. He created many highly artistic works. It is true, he was greatly influenced by Persian poetry, but at the same time, he was the first to introduce a national-historical motif into the Georgian poetry. The poem "Queen Ketevan's Martyrdom" belongs to him. In it he describes a horrible torture of his mother – Queen Ketevan, and her heroic devotion to her country and faith. The national-historical motif is especially strengthened in the works of the poets and public figures of the following generation. Ioseb Tbileli describes poetically the activities and tragic fate of Giorgi Saakadze. King Archil wrote about the adventures of King Teimuraz against the background of the 17th century historic events in his poem "A Conversation between Teimuraz and Rustaveli". It was he who also raised many questions important for the Georgian society, for instance, the question of moral upbringing, maintaining the order of Georgian serf ownership, the attitude towards peasantry, etc.

Alongside original poetry, versified and prosaic translations were created mainly from Persian. Versified translations of "Shah-Name" the cycle of stories of didactic-educational character were particularly popular with the Georgian readers ("Kilila and Damana", etc.).

Georgian architecture of the 15th, 16th centuries was much worse than that of the classical period (11th-13th cc). It was not its natural development, but still monuments, appropriate to the epoch, were built: the city ensemble of Gremi with churches and palaces, the new monastery of Shuamta and the bell-tower of Ninotsminda (in Kakheti), Ananuri ensemble (in Kartli), etc.

The Georgian mural painting of this period is of comparatively lower quality. Many manuscripts were decorated with miniatures. A goldsmiths' workshop was built at the court of Levan II Dadiani where a great many specimens of chasing art were made.

The first Georgian book was also printed in this period. In 1629 "The Georgian alphabet with prayers", "A Georgian-Italian dictionary", the Georgian translation of the Italian prayer "Litania Laurentana" and Francesco-Maria Maggio's "Georgian Grammar" were



prepared in consultation with the Georgian diplomat Nikoloz Cholokashvili (Nikiphore Irbakh) who was in Rome at that time. All these works were printed there. The books printed in Rome were meant for the Catholic missionaries who came to Georgia in great numbers in the 17th century. Many of them left the descriptions of the social and political situation in Georgia of those days. (These were P. Avitabile, Arch. Lamberti, J. Judicce, Chr. Castelli, etc.). Chr. Castelli left sketches, describing the life in Georgia, portraits of politicians. It is very important historic material for researchers.

Kartli in the first half of the 18th century. Vakhtang VI, the son of Levan, was appointed ruler of Kartli in 1703. In the first place, he began restoring order inside the country and did away with the unruliness of tavads with vigorous measures. He returned the lands, seized by tavads to the Church. "A Code of Law" was compiled under his supervision. It soon became a law in force in the whole of Georgia.

Vakhtang paid great attention to restoring the economy of the country. He resettled the deserted places of Kartli. Irrigation canals were built, and the old ones were rebuilt. Roads were put in order, bridges and caravanserais were built and minting money was improved. Trade, artisanship, the city life were revived. Tbilisi again became a thriving city. This was the result of the above-mentioned measures.

Vakhtang VI founded the first printing-house in Tbilisi in 1709. The Georgian, Antimoz of Iveria, working in Rumania, had assisted him in building the printing-house. Antimoz of Iveria had been taken captive in his childhood and later on, he was brought up at the court of Jerusalem Patriarch. A well-educated Antimoz began to work in Rumania afterwards. He distinguished himself as a great patriot of his new motherland. He founded several printing-houses in Rumania. At Vakhtang's request, Antimoz sent his disciple Mikheil Ishtvanovic to build a printing-house in Georgia. In the printing-house, founded in Tbilisi, "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" was printed in 1712, edited by Vakhtang and with his commentary. It was the first scholarly publication of Rustaveli's immortal work. This was a fact of great cultural and political importance.

In this period, gradually a strong group of cultural and political public figures, headed by Vakhtang, was formed who began a vigorous ideological struggle against the domination of the conquerors. This group included poets and literary workers, scholars-historians, a number of state officials and public figures. Their aim was to strengthen national consciousness in the Georgian people and to prepare the country for new decisive battles. In these activities, his tutor and companion-in-arms, the illustrious Georgian writer and scholar-Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, supported Vakhtang.

S. Orbeliani was the author of many scholarly and literary-philosophic works. He compiled a monolingual Georgian dictionary – "Sitqvis Kona" ("A Bunch of Words"), which has not lost its significance even today. He also wrote works of didactic-moral character, such as, for instance, "Wisdom of Lies" ("Sibrdzne Sitsruisa"), "Studies" ("Stsavlebiani"), etc.

Vakhtang also formed a committee of scholars who were to edit "Kartlis Tskhovreba" ("History of Kartli") and to write the history of the last centuries (14th-17th cc). This committee did a great deal of work. The so-called "Akhali Kartlis Tskhovreba" ("The New History of Kartli") was written.

Vakhtang's son, Vakhushti Bagrationi, is a representative of his historical-scientific school. He wrote a substantial research into the history of Georgia. Vakhushti's fundamental



work was at the level of the advanced European scholars of his time. The scholar prince gave us Georgia's historic and geographic description, he compiled a map of all the regions of Georgia and introduced branch and complex methods of conducting research.

Great attention was paid to education in the times of Vakhtang VI. Many educational and scientific works were written in geography, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy and other sciences. It must be mentioned that Vakhtang VI participated in all these activities.

In 1712 Vakhtang VI was summoned to the Shah's Court. It was the period when Vakhtang's brother, Kaikhosro, King of Kartli, was killed in the battle against the insurgents in Afghanistan. Vakhtang was requested to embrace Islam if he wanted to be made king. The Georgian public men did their best to return Vakhtang to Kartli as a Christian. His tutor Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani even went to Europe and tried to find assistance from the Roman Pope and Louis XIV, King of France. However, his mission ended in failure. Europe did not want to spoil relationship with Iran and Turkey because of Georgia. Meanwhile Vakhtang's Mohammedan brother, Iese, who terribly oppressed Vakhtang's supporters, ruled Georgia. Vakhtang was compelled to embrace Islam formally to have a chance to return to Kartli and continue very important national activities. He was allowed to return to Kartli in 1719.

The relations of Vakhtang VI with Russia. Russia again took an interest in the Caucasus in the 20-s of the 18th century. At this time, the Safavid dynasty in Iran had hard times. The Afghans had risen in revolt, and so had other tribes of Iran. Russia had learned the situation in Iran very well. The envoy of Peter I managed to contact Vakhtang VI while he was still in Iran. The King of Kartli was pleased with the appearance of Russia in the arena of the Caucasus again. It aroused hope that Georgia would be liberated from the domination of the Kizilbashi and Ottoman-Turks with the aid and support of the strengthened state of Russia. In 1720 Vakhtang VI and Peter I signed a treaty of military-political alliance. They decided to fight against Iran jointly. According to the treaty, the Russian army was to enter Azerbaijan where it would be joined by the Georgian and Armenian troops, commanded by Vakhtang VI and then they would fight against Iran together.

In July, 1722 Peter I started war in the direction of Transcaucasia and seized the Daghestan littoral of the Caspian Sea. He occupied Daruband (Derbent) as well. However, he was unable to continue fighting, for an epidemic of some disease broke out in the army, the army was not provided with provisions and forage. Owing to this, Peter I was compelled to stop fighting and go back to Astrakhan. Meanwhile Vakhtang VI, according to the agreement, stood at Ganja with a 40000 men army of Georgians and Armenians, waiting for the appearance of the Russian army. After a three-months-long futile waiting he was informed that the Russians had postponed the war. This aggravated Vakhtang's situation. The infuriated Shah gave Kartli to Kakheti King Konstantine who had embraced Islam some time before. The latter occupied Tbilisi in 1723 with the mercenary army of Lezghins. In this fight Tbilisi was raided and pillaged. At this time, Turks began an offensive from the west and soon occupied the whole Kartli. Vakhtang VI could not stay in Georgia, and via Racha he betook himself to Russia with a retinue of 1200 men. The King hoped that he would soon return with an auxiliary army of Russia, but he was not destined to return to Georgia.

Vakhtang was accompanied by a large group of his companions-in-arms and public men, among them was Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, Prince Vakhushhti, his son Bakar and



many others who had worked so well and achieved such good results in Georgia. They continued doing their work in Russia. Georgian settlements appeared near Moscow, in the village of Vsesviatskoye, also on the River Presna and near the monastery of the Don. Great cultural activities were carried out there; scientific and educational books were translated from Russian, the Georgian printing press was restored and Georgian books were printed. They continued scientific research, begun in Georgia. Poet David Guramishvili, who had escaped from the captivity of Lezghins, also arrived there. The work of these people was very important for the development of Georgian culture. Moscow Georgian colony turned into a powerful centre of Georgian-Russian cultural relations.

As for Georgia, the situation there was bad. The Ottoman Turks' domination began in 1723 and lasted for 12 years. Kartli and Kakheti waged liberating wars against them. Kakheti King Konstantine fell victim of the fight against the Ottomans. The Iranian commander Nadir-Khan took advantage of this implacable fight of the Georgian people and drove the Turks out of Georgia.

Now the domination of Turks was replaced by that of the Kizilbashi. It began in 1735. In addition, this time the Georgians started fighting against the Kizilbashi. Konstantine's younger brother Teimuraz II commanded these fights. He acted very shrewdly and prudently and tried to find a common language with Nadir who became the Shah of Iran in 1736. Nadir-Shah did not trust Teimuraz and had him arrested several times. In 1737, Teimuraz sent his son Erekle to the court of Iran at the Shah's request. Nadir-Shah took Erekle, aged 17 at that time, to the war against India.

Prince Erekle, in spite of being young, had lived a hard life. He was fifteen when he first headed peasants' detachments in the fight against the Lezghins and there "Patara Kakhi" ("A small Kakhetian" - this name was given to him by people to show their love for him) showed surprising courage and shrewdness. Since then he had not stopped fighting.

At Nadir-Shah's Court Erekle had had a splendid military training which he successfully used in later life many times.

Erekle returned to Georgia in 1739. At that time, fierce battles were taking place in Kartli. A fire of revolt was burning in the country. Nadir-Shah was compelled to make a number of concessions. He freed Kartli and Kakheti from heavy taxes and allowed Teimuraz II to be crowned king of Kartli according to Christian rites. He made his son Erekle, King of Kakheti.

On October 1, 1745, Teimuraz was crowned king in Svetitskhoveli with great ceremony. The coronation was conducted according to Georgian customs. It was an event of great importance. Over a century had passed since the Georgian King of Kartli and Kakheti ascended the throne according to the Christian rites.

The shah's policy of complete subjugation of Kartli and Kakheti, conducted so insistently had ended in an utter fiasco, and the fact that Iran had admitted it, was a great victory of the Georgian people.



Georgia in the Second Half of the 18th Century Joint Reign of Teimuraz II and Erekle II

The two Georgian Kingdoms, Kartli and Kakheti became practically one kingdom when Teimuraz II ascended the throne of Kartli, and Erekle II became king of Kakheti, for the kings, being father and son, acted in agreement and gave an answer to enemies and friends together. As for the enemies, Georgia had many of them. Even the Court of the Shah of Iran, which, as we have seen, was compelled to restore the reign of Christian kings in Kartli and Kakheti, did not give up the old plans of shahs, concerning Georgia.

Kartli and Kakheti were still vassals of Iran. The Kizilbashi army was stationed there and the actions of the Georgian kings were under the control of Iranian officials. Teimuraz managed to act cleverly. He used the Kizilbashi troops against the raiding Lezghins. He also did not allow the Iranian officials to be unruly. The Georgian kings took advantage of Nadir-Shah's benevolence and tried to gain ascendancy in Transcaucasia. At their request, Nadir-Shah reduced the taxes, but at the same time summoned Erekle to his court. Teimuraz II decided to go to Iran instead of Erekle, being an experienced politician and diplomat.

Teimuraz was still on his way to Iran when a putsch took place there, and the conspirators killed Nadir-Shah in June 1747. Nadir's nephew (his brother's son), Teimuraz's son-in-law, Adil-Shah ascended the throne, but his power did not last long either. His brother overthrew him a few months later. Incessant anarchy began to reign in Iran.

The Transcaucasian domains of Iran were disintegrated into many small khanates. Among them Kartli-Kakheti seemed to be the strongest. In Iran, many pretenders competed in gaining Teimuraz and Erekle's favor. Erekle took advantage of this situation to strengthen his power.

The relations of Kartli and Kakheti with Iran and subjugating neighboring khanates

While Teimuraz was in Iran the nephew of Vakhtang VI Abdula-Beg, the son of Iese, a Moslem, rose against Erekle and tried to occupy Kartli. Erekle inflicted a crushing defeat on Abdula-Beg's troops at the approaches to Tbilisi, and began to fight against the Kizilbashi garrisons, stationed in Tbilisi fortresses. With the assistance of Tbilisi citizens Metekhi and Tabori fortresses were seized and Georgian garrisons were stationed there. This victory brought fame to Erekle and the neighboring khanates tried to establish close relations and alliance with him. The Shah's Court of Iran also avoided spoiling relations with him and was satisfied with insignificant demands. In 1748 Erekle sent only several girls and 100 mounted men-at-arms to serve in kuli (kuli was the Shah's guard) to the Shah. It was the last tribute paid to Iran. Since then Kartli and Kakheti had not paid any tribute to her. Kartli and Kakheti were practically liberated from the domination of Iran, though Teimuraz II still had the title of the Vali of Gurjistan that made him have certain obligations to Iran.



The strengthened kingdoms of Kartli and Kakheti soon spread their influence over their neighboring khanates, and took them under their protection. Special attention of the Georgian politicians was drawn to the territory of neighboring Armenia in whose main stronghold Yerevan a Mohammedan official of Iran, a Khan, was sitting. In 1749, the nomadic Turcoman tribes of Taracamas from Mughan Valley invaded Yerevan khanate. The Khan of Yerevan asked Kartli and Kakheti for help. The Georgians, together with Armenians, defeated the enemy and after this, the Yerevan khanate entered the protectorate of Kartli and Kakheti. Soon the Nakhichevan Khanate also recognized the protectorate of Georgia.

There were some failures alongside this general success as well. This was revealed in the fight against the Lezghins' raids. These raids and incursions did not stop. It is true that Erekle had defeated the Lezghins' detachments in several battles, but still it was impossible to avert the danger of their inroads. The bases of the Lezghins' raids in Transcaucasia were the so-called Char-Belakani communities established on the territory of Kakheti that had no masters and Kak-Eliseni sultanates. If these territories were not subjugated and annexed to Kakheti again, it would be impossible to stop the Lezghins' incursions.

In 1570, a big army of the Lezghins invaded Kartli and Kakheti at the appeal of Chari population. Erekle inflicted a crushing defeat on the main force of the Lezghins. However, this victory, according to the correct assessment of Georgian politicians, was not of a decisive significance, for such incursions of Lezghins were to be expected in future as well. It was decided to conquer Chari and Belakani. The Georgian kings gathered quite a large army. Apart from Georgians, there were the troops of Georgia's vassal countries Ganja-Karabagh and other khanates in the army. Teimuraz and Erekle considered Shaki-Shirvan's Khan Aji-Chelebi to be their ally. The latter seemed to have been friendly disposed towards father and son. However, he came out to defend the Lezghins of Char-Belakani and Kak-Eliseni. He established clandestine contacts with the Mohammedan khans in the Georgian army and won them over to his side. The Georgian kings found out about this treachery late and were defeated in the battle at the Alazani. It was Teimuraz and Erekle's first serious defeat. It became obvious how difficult it was to solve the question of the Lezghins.

Kartli and Kakheti in the 50-s of the 18th century

The failure connected with the annexation of Eastern Kakheti was followed by other complications as well. Apart from the frequent incursions of the Lezghins on Georgia, Kartli and Kakheti were also attacked by Azat-Khan.

Azat-Khan was governor of southern Adarbadagan and intended to ascend the throne of Iran. He decided to take advantage of Teimuraz and Erekle's complicated situation and subjugate the whole of Eastern Transcaucasia. He began with the Yerevan Khanate. His troops besieged the stronghold of Yerevan, and sacked the territory of the Khanate. The Yerevan population turned to Georgians for help.

Erekle immediately started for neighboring Armenia to fight against the enemy that had invaded her. The fight took place at Karbulakh, near Yerevan (on 28 July 1751). Azat-Khan had a larger army than Erekle, and he was sure of his victory. He attacked



the Georgian troops, oppressed them in some places and began to surround them from all sides. The Kizilbashi were eager to capture Erekle alive. However, Erekle's unparalleled courage and brilliant military talent won a victory. He himself led the avantgarde of his army against the self-confident enemy, and attacked the centre of Azat-Khan's army so unexpectedly and so skilfully that the army retreated in disorder. This blow had such an overwhelming effect that the army's spirit was broken and it dispersed in confusion.

The Georgians pursued the Kizilbashi at a large distance. They killed and captured many of them. Azat-Khan rescued himself by fleeing, and found shelter in Adarbadagan, across the Araxe. It was a victory of great significance, but this success was spoiled by the incessant threat of the Lezghins' raids, and especially the actions of Aji-Chelebi, the khan of Shaki-Shirvan.

The khan of Shaki-Shirvan, Aji-Chelebi tried to form a coalition against Georgia. He even managed to create an opposition of Moslem khans to Christian Erekle and Teimuraz. Even Georgia's vassal Moslem rulers took his side; some were forced to do it, others of their own free will. He defeated Erekle-Teimuraz's army near Ganja (March 1752). This victory made Aji-Chelebi and his supporters too bold and they attacked Georgia jointly. Hordes of Lezghins also invaded Kartli and Kakheti.

In this grave situation, father and son displayed a fighting spirit. They acted vigorously. The whole population took refuge in fortresses. Every man fit to bear arms was mobilized. Men were sent to Northern Caucasus to recruit mercenaries, Circassians and other mountain people.

Erekle was heart and soul of these activities. He himself went towards the Dariali Pass to conduct negotiations with Circassian princes, concerning recruiting mercenaries. He soon returned from there with a sufficient number of auxiliary forces. The Georgian Kings also sent envoys to Russia, headed by Atanase Tbileli and Simon Makashvili (on 30 May 1752). They informed Empress Elizaveta, the daughter of Peter I, of the created grave situation and asked her for military help.

Such vigorous measures, taken by the Georgians, startled the enemy and made them abandon the plan of conquering Georgia. Erekle overtook the retreating army of Aji-Chelebi at the frontier of Kazakh Shamshadil and inflicted a crushing defeat on it (on September 5, 1752).

This victory helped Erekle not only to avoid the aforementioned great danger, but it also dispersed the coalition of Moslem rulers that the Shaki-Shirvan Khan had formed against Georgia. The Khans of Yerevan, Ganja and other khanates renewed their allegiance to Teimuraz and Erekle. Other consequences followed these events too. Having heard of the hard times in Georgia, Azat-Khan again decided to move towards the frontiers of Kartli and Kakheti. However, having received the information of the Georgian kings' victory, he made up his mind to be reconciled with them and offered them peace. Peace was very important for Teimuraz and Erekle. The fact that Azat-Khan abandoned his aggressive plans against Georgia prevented many reactionary tavads from acting against their sovereigns. They waited for Azat-Khan's invasion to free themselves from Teimuraz and Erekle's strong power.

Erekle and Teimuraz conducted a successful foreign policy as well. Kartli and Kakheti were practically free from Iran's domination. What is more, by five-year long incessant warfare and political measures Erekle and Teimuraz made their priority in Eastern



Transcaucasia obvious. Their names and especially the rumor of Erekle's military talent spread everywhere.

European politicians paid great attention to the events going on in Persia at that time, and it is natural that their attention should be drawn to the Georgian Kings, fighting so actively. Their representatives in Eastern countries sent them information regularly about the victories of Erekle and Teimuraz. Sometimes the information was exaggerated. This information was published in the European press of those days. Several books, describing Teimuraz and Erekle's activities, were published too.

In spite of these external political successes, the situation in Georgia was still bad. This was caused in the first place, by constant incursions of the Lezghins. The incessant inroads, organized by the Daghestani brigands did irremediable harm to the country. It was difficult for feudal Georgia to fight against these incursions. Her military organization was unable to stop the permanent danger of their attacks. The Georgian feudal army consisted mainly of Georgian peasants and was usually gathered when the enemy invaded the country or on some other special occasion. It generally happened for a short time, for it was impossible to make peasants leave their work on the land. The king's exchequer could not afford to keep a regular army or an army of mercenaries for a long time. In addition, just such a regular army was necessary to repulse the Lezghins' attacks. They would appear unexpectedly in different places, and avoid fighting, for their aim was to get booty and captives. They stealthily attacked defenceless villages, peasants at work, and travelers on roads. Robbed fortresses, churches, and monasteries. They carried away everything they could, drove away cattle, captured people, asked great ransoms for the latter, and in case they were not paid, they sent these captives to the market in Turkey. In this way, Georgia was losing the best part of her population. Only healthy and young captive had a high price in the Turkey slave market.

Lezghins' incursions on Kakheti were especially frequent in 1754-1760. The whole country was filled with the hordes of buccaneer-robbers. The population was permanently hiding in fortresses. Owing to this, the country's economy was almost extinct. It was not only intensive economy that faced the danger of disappearance in the conditions of endless raids, plunder and being taken prisoner. The Georgians also faced the danger of extinction.

Integration of Kartli and Kakheti into One Kingdom Relations with Russia

The mission of Teimuraz II in Russia. As early as in the period of Atanase Tbileli's mission in Russia (1752) Georgian kings advised Russia to take advantage of the disturbances reigning in Iran and appear in the arena of Nearer Asia, depending on Georgia. Georgian politicians connected far-reaching plans with Russia's interference in the affairs of the Caucasus and Iran. According to their supposition, Russia would try "to rescue and restore" Georgia, i.e. it would try to liberate Georgia from the Moslems' domination, and would assist her to become a powerful state again. They thought that Russia would carry out her policy in Nearer Asia successfully in alliance with Georgia and depending on her. It is known that this plan was not realized at that time. Having consulted one another, father and son decided that Teimuraz II would go to Russia in



person and present a certain request and a bold plan of action to St. Petersburg. Georgia was to receive money as a loan to reorganize the Georgian army or recruit mercenaries. In this way, they would stop the Lezghins' raids in Kartli and Kakheti, and they would enter Iran with a special army. There they would convene a meeting of Persian nobility and make them elect the shah of Iran, a person desirable to Russia. The realization of this plan would enable the Georgians to get rid of Iran's domination. Herewith, the country would be free from constant inroads of the Ciscaucasian mountain tribes.

In 1761, King Teimuraz II with a numerous suite went to Russia to present this plan. Unfortunately, Russia did not take a proper interest in these proposals. She was waging war against Prussia at that time and did not want to make an enemy of Turkey either. Besides, at the end of 1761 Empress Elizaveta, the daughter of Peter I, died and Peter III, known for his queerness, occupied the throne of Russia. On January 8, 1762, King Teimuraz II died in St. Petersburg. The members of his suite took his remains and interred him in the Church of Dormition of the Virgin in Astrakhan beside the grave of King Vakhtang VI.

The unification of Kartli and Kakheti. Meanwhile Erekle II had achieved great success. He had defeated crushingly Panah-Khan, the ruler of Karabagh and confirmed his right on Ganja as well. The rulers of Shaki, Shemakha, Karabagh, and Nakhichevan also recognized his ascendancy. Armenia also pledged allegiance to the Georgian King. Erekle had captured one of the pretenders to the throne of the Shah of Iran and his old adversary Azat-Khan.

Having received the information of the death of Teimuraz II, Erekle immediately declared himself king of the united kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti. He sent his precious captive, Azat-Khan, to Kerim-Khan, his rival to the throne of Iran, and gained great political dividends by this act; grateful Kerim-Khan recognized the integration of Kartli and Kakheti into one kingdom. He also confirmed Erekle in his right to the khanates of Yerevan and Ganja. He confirmed the Georgian king's priority in Eastern Transcaucasia by this act. A prospect of restoring powerful Georgia was in sight.

Kartli reactionary tavads did not like such strengthening of Erekle's power. They were well aware of the fact that Erekle's further success would result in repressing their unruliness. Having no hope of the assistance of external forces any longer, they tried to organize a conspiracy. They intended to make the illegitimate son of Vakhtang VI, Prince Paata, king of Kartli. The conspiracy, in which a large group of Kartli tavads was involved, was revealed at the end of 1765.

The trial of the conspirators was held in December. Erekle understood the social significance of this case. Therefore, it was not he who imposed a sentence on conspirators. He had this done by a public sitting of the Darbazi (Council). The conspirators were punished severely. Prince Paata, David Abdula-Beg's son and Elizbar Taktakishvili were executed. The rest of them were punished in different ways. Among them very young, Alexandre Amilakhvari's nose was cut off and a blood vessel on his leg was severed. This made him a cripple for life and he became Erekle's mortal enemy.

Kartli tavads had not endeavored to terrorize Erekle II since then, but they had not given up the idea of fighting against him and were waiting for a suitable time.

Georgia and Russo-Turkish war. In 1768 Russo-Turkish war began. In this situation, the support of the Caucasian Christian peoples was very important for



Russia. The more so as the Georgian politicians had asked to bring the Russian army to the Caucasus many times. After the necessary preparation a Russian military corps, commanded by General Todtleben, was sent to Georgia. The general was to attack Turkey with the help of Georgian troops from the Caucasus and in this way to immobilize the Turks' troops at the frontiers of the Caucasus.

Erekle assessed the created situation correctly, took advantage of the Russian army's entering Georgia and worked out a bold plan of a joint attack of the Russian and Georgia armies on Akhaltsikhe. He hoped to return this historic territory of Georgia by means of a powerful attack on Turks in Samtskhe-Saatabago.

In the spring of 1770, General Todtleben with his 1200-men corps and a few pieces of artillery and Erekle II with 7000 men and 3 cannons started for Akhaltsikhe via Borjomi Gorge. Soon the Russian general revealed signs of hesitation. The general who had received his military education in Prussia was not sure of the success of Erekle's bold plan, therefore after the unsuccessful attack on Atskuri fortress Todtleben turned back and left Erekle face to face with the Turks. In spite of this Erekle with his army continued to move on. The warriors stationed in Akhalkalaki and Khertvisi fortresses barred their passage. Erekle defeated them and reached Aspindza. There the Turks and Lezhghins' main force was crossing the river Mtkvari. Erekle retreated and allowed the enemy to cross the river. He ordered his people to destroy the bridge at night clandestinely. The Turks were unable to communicate with their reserves and to retreat either.

On April 20 the Georgians, commanded by Erekle, spread out, facing the enemy; the battle started by the Georgians' assault. The enemy was unable to resist the attack of the Georgian mounted men-at-arms and began to retreat in disorder. King Erekle himself gave an example of heroism to the Georgian troops. The participants of the battle said that Erekle had slain the famous leader of the Lezhghins Kokhta (Mala Chala). The Turks' commander-in-chief and almost all commanders had been killed while fighting. The panic-stricken enemy ran towards the bridge, but the bridge having been destroyed, many of them were drowned in the river. The enemy left 4000 killed soldiers in the battlefield. Only 13 of those who had fled reached Akhaltsikhe. The Georgians caught hold of several scores of captives, a great number of standards, horses and an enormous quantity of arms. The Georgians' losses were insignificant.

Erekle was unable to take proper advantage of the results of this brilliant victory. He was compelled to return to Tbilisi urgently, due to Todtleben's scandalous behavior. The adventurer general set the tavads of Kartli against him and engaged in intrigues. He had begun occupying fortresses and forced the population to take an oath of allegiance to the Russian Emperor. Erekle compelled Todtleben to give up his intentions by taking vigorous steps and made him leave Kartli. Having received reinforcement, Todtleben betook himself to Imereti.

Despite the fact that the appearance of the Russian army in the arena of the Caucasus during the Russo-Turkish war had not brought the desirable effect to Eastern Georgia, Erekle still tried to retain and broaden relations with Russia. He sent special envoys to St. Petersburg with this purpose in 1772. Cathalicos Anton and Prince Levan headed these ambassadors. The request was that Russia should take Kartli and Kakheti under her protection. Russia did not pay attention to this proposal, and while concluding the Kuchuk-Kainarji peace-treaty only the question of Western Georgia was raised and not very



advantageous for Georgia at that: Russia recognized the rights of Turkey on Western Georgia on condition that Turkey did not demand paying tribute on the part of Imereti.

Reign of Alexandre V and Solomon I in Imereti

Imereti King Alexandre V had to rule over the country under very hard conditions (1712-1752). It is true he was vigorously supported by Kartli King Vakhtang VI, but after he had gone to Russia and Turks' domination was established in Eastern Georgia their influence became stronger in Imereti too. The Ottomans gradually occupied the fortresses of the Black Sea littoral. By that time, their garrisons were stationed in Batumi, Tsikhisdziri, Kobuleti, Poti and Sukhumi fortresses. They had also occupied Shorapani, Tsetskhvati, Bagdati and even Kutaisi fortresses in Imereti. Ottoman Pashas were sitting in Poti and Sukhumi fortresses.

In spite of this hard situation, the Ottomans had not managed to subjugate the whole of Western Georgia. The local population fought against the conquerors indefatigably, and defeated them a number of times. It must also be noted that the Sultan's Court was compelled to use Akhaltsikhe Pasha and Ajara-Samtskhe Moslem Georgians. The garrisons stationed in the fortresses, occupied by the Turks, were mainly manned by Moslem Georgians. The latter had quite close relations with the local population (trade, ties of relationship, etc.). This factor gave a different meaning to the Turks' domination in Western Georgia.

Alexandre V tried to use Russia's help against the Turks. He even sent special ambassadors to Russia (1738). But all in vain. Russia refused to give assistance to the king of Imereti in his fight against Turkey. Internal feudal wars were still going on in the country with accompanying selling slaves and raids and pillage.

In 1752 King Alexandre V died and very young, 17-year-old Solomon I ascended the throne. Solomon began his activities with the fight against reactionary tavads' unruliness and selling slaves. By it he gained the support of the majority of the population. The most powerful tavads rose against the young king many times, headed by the Abashidzes and Racha eristavi. Solomon defeated his adversaries with his bold actions and continued fighting more vigorously to realize his aim. He surrounded himself with petty tavads, managed to become reconciled with the princes of Guria and Samegrelo, and in this way left his irreconcilable enemies-Racha eristavi and Levan Abashidze without supporters. All this strengthened the king's power considerably.

The sultan of the Ottoman Empire was greatly displeased with the strengthening of the king of Imereti. He was particularly vexed by his banning the traffic in prisoners. He ordered the Akhaltsikhe pasha to address Solomon with the request that he should allow the trade in captives as it had been before. Solomon did not satisfy this request and began to get ready for the war against the enemy. His brother-in-law, Katsia Dadiani and Mamia Gurieli, supported the king. The Prince of Samurzaqano, Khutunia Shervashidze also came to his aid.

The Ottoman army was encamped in Khresili field. The traitors of the country, Levan Abashidze and Racha eristavi's army came to the enemy's camp. However, the majority of Imereti population, especially the peasantry, supported the king. On December 14th,



1757, at daybreak the Imereti army, commanded by King Solomon, assaulted the Turks' camp. The enemy had been warned and expected the Georgians' attack, therefore they were successful at the beginning and even got hold of the royal standard, but the young (22-year-old) Solomon demonstrated great courage and the talent of a good commander. He, in a combat, killed the Turks' commander and boldly attacked the confused enemy. Part of the traitor tavads' army joined him, taking his side. Levan Abashidze himself was killed in the battlefield. The Gurian troops broke through the ranks of the enemy and regained the royal standard. The defeated enemy fled from the battlefield. The traitor tavads also found refuge in Turkey. Khutunia Shervashidze, having killed sixteen Turks with his sword, died the death of a hero in the battlefield.

The victory in Khresili strengthened King Solomon considerably. The Abashidzes' satavado was subjugated. Levan Abashidze's son, Gedevan, who had fought on the enemy's side was captured and blinded, also other traitor tavads were deprived of their lands and fortresses. Only Rostom, cristavi of Racha was not punished. It seems that King Solomon did not have enough strength to subjugate this most powerful feudal lord. However, in future the King was not going to tolerate his recalcitrance. And indeed, 10 years later, when favorable conditions were created, the king punished this most powerful traitor tavad severely.

King Solomon knew that it was necessary to unite Georgia's forces in the fight against conquerors. In 1758, the kings of Imereti, Kartli and Kakheti formed a military alliance. This alliance made the kings of Imereti, Kartli and Kakheti considerably stronger.

In December 1759, the Church Council was convened. It was attended by both the clergy of high rank and influential secular feudal lords. Apart from discussing the issues important for the Church, a decree about banning the traffic in captives and other important laws for the state were passed. The initiator and supervisor of these affairs was King Solomon.

In the 60-s of the 18th century the Turks attacked Imereti several times, but Solomon inflicted several serious defeats upon the enemy. Finally, the King of Imereti compelled the enemy to give up not only the idea of conquering the country, but also the demand of her vassalage, and recognize it only as the country being under the protectorate of the Ottoman Empire. This term was included into the agreement of 1767. Concluding this peace-treaty made it easy for Solomon to solve the internal problems as well. Soon he finally defeated his cousin Teimuraz, the son of Mamuka, who was pretender to his throne. It is noteworthy that Katsia Dadiani, Giorgi Gurieli, Rostom-cristavi of Racha and other reactionary tavads, supported this adventurer. Solomon defeated the traitors in the battle at Tskhratskharo in 1768, captured Teimuraz and locked him in prison where he died.

This defeat made Rostom, cristavi of Racha, seek the ways of reconciliation with the King, but Solomon caught him together with his sons and blinded him. He declared a great part of Racha saeristavo the property of the State Exchequer. He gave the rest of the saeristavo to his faithful subjects. The abolition of Racha saeristavo even more consolidated the inner integrity of Imereti Kingdom.

The Russian army in Imereti. Solomon I thought it necessary to have contacts with Russia to reach final progress in the relations with Turkey and to take advantage of the interests of Russia to drive Turkey out of the Caucasus for good. In 1768, Solomon sent to Russia Maxime Kutateli as an envoy, and asked the Russian



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1. The scene of Queen Ketevan's torture. The fresco from the Church of De Grassa in Lisbon.
2. The view of Tbilisi. 17th century (J. Chardin).
3. Great Mouravi – Giorgi Saakadze (from the album of Chr. Castelli).



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1. Vakhtang VI.
2. Solomon I.
3. Catholicos Anton I.
4. Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani.
5. The bronze medallion, made in connection with signing The Georgievsk Treaty.
6. Giorgi XII.



Emperor for protection. Instead, he promised to help Russia in the war against Turkey. In the meantime, the Russo-Turkish war broke out, and as we have mentioned, Russia sent an army to Georgia, commanded by General Todtleben.

Due to his disgraceful treacherous behavior in Eastern Georgia, the Russian general was compelled to go to Imereti in 1770.

Meanwhile Solomon took advantage of the defeat inflicted by Erekle on Akhaltsikhe Pasha at Aspidza and cleared Tsutskhvati and Shorapani fortresses of the Turks. He also occupied the city of Kutaisi and besieged its fortress. After Todtleben had marched into Imereti Imereti King, together with the Russian troops, surrounded Bagdati fortress and forced it to surrender. The Turks were also driven out of Kutaisi fortress. In October 1770, Todtleben with the Russian troops besieged Poti fortress. However, in spite of a long siege he was unable to take it. Todtleben established contacts with the princes, being in opposition with the King. This fact spoiled his relations with Solomon. Soon the Emperor's Court of Russia became convinced that Todtleben disgraced Russia and recalled him from Georgia. General Sukhotin substituted him, but neither this Russian general was able to have good relations with the Georgian king. He did not think much of the Georgian interests, and what is more, he had a very poor idea of the local conditions, and did not follow the Georgians' advice either. This was the reason that he was defeated near Poti and suffered great losses too. Due to such shameful activities of her generals, Russia decided to recall her troops from Georgia, and indeed, in May 1772 the Russian army left the frontiers of Georgia. The Turks took advantage of this and snatched Kobuleti region from Guria and annexed it to Trebizond Vilayet.

In January 1774, the Ottoman 4000-men army invaded Imereti. Solomon turned to Erekle for help. The Imeretians drove the invaders into the River Chkherimela Gorge and exterminated them all.

Meanwhile Russia concluded a peace-treaty with Turkey in Kuchuk-Kainarji. The 23-rd article of this agreement concerned Georgia: the government of Russia recognized the rights of Turkey on Western Georgia on condition that Turkey did not demand paying tribute from Imereti.

Georgia after the Russo-Turkish war. Preparation of the Georgievsk Treaty

In the period of the Russo-Turkish war, while the Russian army was in Georgia, the Georgians were acquainted with the characteristic features of "the learned army", and became convinced of the priority of a regular military force to the feudal troops. It was decided to form a new type of the army that would be better than a feudal army. In 1773 the Royal Council (Darbazi) adopted "the regulations of military detachments", realized as early as 1774. It was an endeavor to form the army analogous to the Russian permanent regular military force related to the local conditions, for the Exchequer could not afford to support such an army. Therefore, each man able to fight was obliged to serve in this army for a month every year at his expense and with his arms. If a peasant was unable to equip himself, his master was to provide him with everything. Nobody was freed from this service; even the members of the Royal House did it. The forms of the



military training and organization of men-at-arms were also worked out. The heart and soul of these activities was Levan, Erekle's son. These mobile detachments achieved great success under his guidance.

Beginning with 1774 the state of Kartli and Kakheti had 5000 men-at-arms ready to fight every year. This army played the greatest part in the further strengthening of the country: there were no more raids of Lezghins in the country and a comparative peace was established. The peasants left the strongholds, fortified enclosures, and took up farming again. Erekle was able to conduct a more active policy in Transcaucasia. However, the Kartli tavads were against the strengthening of this kind of army. They were well aware of the fact that this military force was directed against them as well. The high-rank noblemen did their best to abolish these detachments. In 1781, Prince Levan died unexpectedly, and the other princes did not express great wish to be at the head of this business. True, the reactionary tavads did not dare to act against the King's policy openly, but by means of a secret boycott and bribing the officials, guiding these military detachments, they managed to achieve their aim. The number of men-at-arms diminished every year, and finally the army ceased its existence. It was the victory of reactionary tavads and a great failure of King Erekle's policy. It was clear that the existing social system hindered carrying out important progressive reforms.

Reforms in economics. Erekle II paid great attention to economic reforms. Apart from this, the king did his best to establish peace in the country and create normal conditions for the peasant to practise economy. He took decisive steps to prevent the feudal lords' excessive exploitation of their peasants, i.e. to establish order in the relations of master and serf. With the help of his judges-mdivan-begs, he actively interfered in the disagreement between the masters and their serfs and tried to do away with any in justice. He passed a number of laws by means of which he tried to improve the conditions of serfs. All this served the purpose of encouraging the peasant to work on the land. Farming was the foundation of the country's economics.

The king assisted not only the restoration of farming but also the revival and development of industry. In the 60-s mining industry was restored in Georgia. Since the processing of ore was almost forgotten in Kartli and Kakheti of those days he moved several hundreds of households of Greeks, specialists of this pursuit, from Anatolia to Georgia who resumed processing silver ore in Akhtala, and began to work at the copper ore in Alaverdi. Here about 700 or 1000 workers worked from time to time. Very soon 1500 kg. of pure silver and a sufficient amount of copper filled the King's funds.

King Erekle established other new branches of industry as well: he improved military industry, the technique of minting money, printing business; he paid great attention to the development of home and foreign trade. The city life was considerably revived by the development of trade and artisanship and the appearance of new branches of manufacture. The city of Tbilisi became larger. The towns of Gori, Telavi, Tskhinvali and Akhlagori became more prosperous. New towns sprang up. For instance, Ananuri and Dusheti turned into towns. As for Signaghi, it became one of the most important centers of trade and artisanship in Eastern Georgia. Erekle put in order the questions of the city government, the rights of merchants and artisans, and the ownership of property. In this way, he established order in the town-life of Eastern Georgia.



Establishing order in the government institutions. Erekle paid special attention to establishing order in governing the country. He tried to reform the antiquated state system in Georgia, based on the will of the high nobility. He wanted to establish a new, firmly centralized progressive system of governing the country. He abolished half-independent saeristavos and khanates (Aragvi and Ksani saeristavos, and Borchalo and Baidar khanates) and established the government of officials-prefects (mouravis). The government in central power was divided into the branches of foreign affairs, the state income and military affairs. The king convened the King's Council to solve all important problems. The council consisted of the closest counselors of the King.

Preparation of the treaty. As we have seen Erekle II sent ambassadors to Russia, headed by Anton I and Prince Levan as early as in 1772, and asked for protection. However, at that time Russia rejected the offer. But, in the 80-s the attitude of Russia's ruling circles towards the Georgian issue changed radically. After Russia had spread her influence over the Crimea and her frontiers approached the Caucasian Range the interest of the Emperor's Court in Transcaucasia became stronger. The Russian politicians had not revealed a great wish of interfering in the affairs of the countries, situated beyond the Caucasian Range before, now the situation had changed. The ringleaders of Russia's foreign policy began to make plans of spreading Russia's influence over Nearer Asia via the Caucasus. Christian Georgia occupied the first place in these plans. Proceeding from this, the visits of Russian officials, envoys, travelers to the Court of Erekle II became frequent. They advised the King to restore his contacts with Russia, to ask the Emperor for protection officially. Erekle II was pleased with this turn of events. On December 21, 1782, Erekle officially asked the Russian Tsar for protection. This was a very desirable fact for the Russian government's foreign policy and the Emperor's Court immediately proved their goodwill towards Erekle- they ordered Patali-Khan to give up his intention of invading Kartli and Kakheti.

According to the "points of appeal" in which the terms of the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom's entering Russia's protectorate were presented, the Government of Russia immediately started preparing the text of the document. The work on the project of the agreement was finished at the beginning of 1783 and General-Poruchik Pavel Potyomkin, the commander of "the Caucasian Line", was allowed to compile a treaty with the representatives of Georgia. The project of the treaty was sent to Erekle II. It was discussed in detail at the sitting of the King's Council, and after some changes had been introduced, it was decided to adopt it.

Adoption of the treaty. On July 24, 1783, Erekle's representatives Prince Ioane Mukhran-Batoni and Prince Garsevan Chavchavadze signed the "treaty of friendship with Russia" in the fortress of Georgievsk in the North Caucasus. On the Russian side, General Pavel Potyomkin signed the treaty. On January 24, 1784, Catherine II sent a ratifying deed. After this Erekle II also signed the treaty and it became a law.

The treaty envisaged bilateral obligations. The king of Kartli and Kakheti denied his being dependent on any other country and recognized the supremacy and protection of the Russian tsar.

The king that was to ascend the royal throne of Georgia was to be confirmed by the emperor of Russia, and it was the latter that was to send him kings' regalia.



The king of Kartli and Kakheti was to conduct his foreign policy in agreement with Russia, and in case of necessity, he was to help Russia with all his military forces at the request of the tsar.

On his part, the Emperor of Russia promised the king of Georgia protection and defence from external enemies. The emperor also guaranteed that he would restore Georgia in her historic boundaries. Russia was not to interfere in the internal affairs of the country. The emperor also promised that he would always defend Erekle and his heirs' rights on the throne. Russia's two battalions of infantry were always to be stationed in Georgia. In case of war, additional military force would be sent. Thus, according to this "treaty of friendship", the kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti became a country dependent on the Russian Empire, but it remained a sovereign country.

This agreement was of great importance for both parties. Erekle hoped that this pact would save his country from being swallowed and destroyed by the backward east. As for Russia, she managed to get across the Caucasian Range without fighting and received an extremely advantageous bridgehead to her south.

The consequences of the treaty. Erekle II connected the agreement with Russia with far-reaching plans. In the first place, he hoped to stop Lezghins' incursions on Kartli and Kakheti for good with the help of the powerful protector. This would give the country a possibility of beginning wide construction works, and she would also have a chance to destroy the Lezghins' center in Char-Belakani and Kak-Eliseni and this territory belonging to Georgia from time immemorial (Sainguilo) would be annexed to Georgia again. In addition, Erekle hoped that in the future Russo-Turkish war he would return Meskheti lands as well. Supported by Russia, he would strengthen his rights on neighboring Moslem khanates.

However, unfortunately, the events took a different turn. The sultan of Turkey considered Georgia's alliance with Russia to be a threat to his country and mobilized all his force. He appealed to the Moslem khanates of the Caucasus and Daghestan princes to rise in defence of Islam and against the settling of Christian Russia in Transcaucasia, to fight with joint forces against it. First, he called to them to begin fighting against the kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti. The domain of Akhaltsikhe Pasha became a base of the Ottomans' aggression. They got together groups of brigands there and sent them to sack Georgia. Raiding troops assaulted Georgia from all sides. The two battalions, sent by Russia and Erekle's military force were unable to repulse these permanent raids. In 1785, the 20000-men army of Omar-Khan, ruler of Avaria, invaded Georgia. He razed to the ground Akhaltsa mining production, and took prisoner several hundreds of people, working on the mine. Erekle was compelled to pay 10000 manets simultaneously to Omar-Khan and he undertook to pay him a "salary" of 5000 manets annually.

In these hard times for Georgia, the reactionary tavads also rose in rebellion. They understood very well that Erekle connected the relations with Russia with carrying out progressive reforms. They knew it would result in reducing their rights. Erekle's wife, Queen Darejan, was on the side of the reactionary tavads. This rather narrow-minded woman, experienced in carrying on intrigues, thought only of the welfare of herself and her children. She did not care what would happen to the country if they had all they wanted. All these reactionary people were of anti-Russian orientation and advised the elderly king to break the alliance with Russia and to try to find an agreement with Turkey.



In 1787, a new Russo-Turkish war broke out, and the Russian Government with the pretext that Turkey might attack Georgia if the Russian troops remained there, recalled the Russian battalions. New complicated problems arose before the head of the country. It seems that these unparalleled hardships and age broke the will of indefatigable and courageous Erekle. He made more and more concessions to the self-willed queen and other members of the family. It was owing to these people and their influence that an extremely important undertaking of uniting Eastern and Western Georgia was not realized.

The questions of integration of Imereti with Kartli-Kakheti. Imereti king Solomon I died in 1784. Since he had not left a son and heir, a fight for the throne started between the king's cousin David, the son of Giorgi, and his nephew David, the son of Archil. The latter was the son of King Erekle's daughter Elene. As the fight went on endlessly, the high authorities of Imereti turned to Erekle with the proposal of integrating Imereti with the Kingdom of Kartli and declaring himself king of Eastern and Western Georgia. The moment was favorable indeed. Turkey was losing the war against Russia. Akhaltsikhe Pasha tried to betray the Sultan and to become Erekle's ally. Neither Iran would be against the unification of Western Georgia and Kartli and Kakheti, for the Shah of Iran still thought that the kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti was his vassal. The majority of Imereti population was also for this unification.

The king discussed the question of the integration of Imereti with the kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti at the sitting of the Darbazi. The majority of the Darbazi members supported the question of integration, but there also were the members who were against it. The deliberation was heated. Erekle was compelled to postpone it till the next day. At this moment, Queen Darejan interfered. She was under the influence of reactionary tavads. She also feared that after Erekle's death her stepson would ascend the throne of united Georgia, he would be a powerful monarch and would oppress her own offspring. She preferred her grandson David Archil's son to be the king of Imereti. In the end Erekle was persuaded to reject the offer of Imereti tavads and to take care of making his grandson David, the son of Archil, king of Imereti. It was an obvious victory of the reaction and a serious defeat of the country's progressive forces.

The progressive forces still managed to form a military alliance of the kingdoms and principalities of Eastern and Western Georgia in 1790. They took an obligation upon themselves to fight against the external enemy jointly. King Erekle's counselor, Solomon Lionidze, was the inspirer of this agreement, the agreement "confirmed by the kings and princes of Iveria". According to this agreement, the kings and princes of Western Georgia concluded a military alliance with the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti and joined the 1783 treaty. The allies acknowledged the supremacy and protection of King Erekle II and entrusted him with establishing relations with Russia. It was a comparative progress of the joint Georgian policy. The more so as the new king of Imereti was Erekle's grandson David, the son of Archil. He took the name of Solomon II after ascending the throne. The new king of Imereti followed the advice of his grandfather, Erekle II, and did what the latter told him to do.



Battle of Krtsanisi

After many years of inter-dynasty fights Agha-Mohammed-Khan, head of the Turcoman tribe of Kajar, won a victory and became shah of Iran. By 1794 he had got rid of all his adversaries and turned all his attention to Transcaucasia. One of his main aims was to restore Iran's domination in Transcaucasia and drive Russia away from there. He was particularly annoyed by the 1783 treaty that connected Georgia with Russia. In the spring of 1795, he was already in Ardebil with the army of 70000 men, preparing for the war in the Caucasus. A great part of Azerbaijani Khans took his side. Only the khan of Shusha Ibrahim and the Khan of Yerevan Mohammed remained Erekle's faithful allies.

Erekle immediately informed St. Petersburg and the commanders of the Caucasian line about the approaching danger. The commander of the Caucasian line Gudovitch was indifferent to Erekle's fears.

Agha-Mohammed-Khan acted methodically. He started blocking the fortresses of Shusha and Yerevan. Erekle sent a Georgian army, commanded by Prince Alexandre, to help the khan of Shusha. The united detachment of Georgians and the Khan of Shusha inflicted a crushing defeat on the Persian army, moving towards the Shusha fortress.

In the meantime Agha-Mohammed-Khan had substantially studied the possibilities of Russia's military help to Georgia and became convinced that Russia's Caucasian commanders did not intend to send an army to help Erekle. After this, he advanced on Georgia with his innumerable military forces. Erekle, accompanied by his grandson, Imereti king Solomon II who had come to help him, headed for Yerevan. The Shah's brother attacked the fortress of Yerevan and Agha-Mohammed-Khan himself was laying siege to the Shusha fortress. It was not clear when and where he would advance on Georgia from.

The ruler of Iran did not wait for the fall of the Shusha fortress, and with the army of 35000 men moved towards Tbilisi via Ganja. Erekle immediately hurried to Tbilisi. There were only 5000 men-at-arms at his disposal. The fight against 35000 men with these scanty forces needed great self-sacrifice, but the king and the people surrounding him were determined to put up a fierce resistance to the enemy.

On September 8, Agha-Mohammed-Khan occupied the village of Soghanlugh and began to build a fortified camp there. The Georgians also built defence fences. Separate detachments of the Georgian army were commanded by Erekle's grandson David, the son of Giorgi, Ioane Mukhran-Batoni, Prince Vakhtang, the son of Erekle, Otar Amilakhvari, etc. The population of Tbilisi had also formed a special detachment that fought selflessly, defending their native town. This detachment of the city-dwellers was commanded by the actor of the King's Court-Machabela.

Agha-Mohammed-Khan began the offensive on September 10. The Georgians repulsed the enemy's first attack with a strong fire of artillery. The enemy suffered great losses. The commander of the advanced detachment, Medjlum, was killed. Agha-Mohammed-Khan threw fresh forces into the offensive, but all in vain. The Georgians defeated all these forces in fierce battles; only dusk separated the adversaries.

Alarmed by the defeat of the first day, Agha-Mohammed-Khan even intended to go back, but traitors informed him that Erekle had a small army; therefore, on September 11



he began a new offensive. The Persians attacked the Georgian trenches repeatedly, but only suffered great losses. To stop the startled army the shah of Persia placed Turcomans behind the attacking forces and ordered them to ruthlessly kill everybody whom they would see fleeing or retreating. Meanwhile he sent several hundred equestrians in the direction of Shindisi to ride around Erekle's troops from the rear, and he himself took a risky decision.

The river had risen and the Georgians, hoping that the enemy would not be able to cross it, had not fortified that side. Besides, they did not have enough troops to defend the left bank of the Mtkvari. Agha-Mohammed-Khan was the first to enter the swollen river and ordered his equestrians to follow suit. While crossing the river 300 Kizilbashi horsemen were drowned, but their significant part managed to cross the river. Thus, the Georgians faced the danger of being attacked from the rear, from the undefended side, therefore, Erekle ordered his soldiers to leave their trenches and move to the back line of defence. Agha-Mohammed-Khan again crossed the river in the vicinity of Ortachala gardens and the Persians attacked the Georgians, exhausted by unequal fighting, more daringly. A fierce battle began to rage. Agha-Mohammed-Khan's horse was killed, many of his commanders were also killed, but the Shah would not stop, and attacked the tired out Georgians with fresh forces again and again.

The last episodes of the warfare were particularly tragic. 75-year-old Erekle fought in the middle of the battlefield. There was a danger of his being taken prisoner, for he was surrounded by the enemy on all sides, but Erekle's grandson Ioane, the son of Giorgi, with his faithful detachment broke through the enemy ranks and took the fighting king away from the battlefield. A very small detachment of Georgians survived the battle. Only 150 mounted men-at-arms accompanied the king, going to Mtiuleti. The enemy hordes occupied Tbilisi.

Only several names of those who gave their lives for their country in the Krtsanisi battle have remained in history. For instance, the name of Giorgi Guramishvili who commanded the Georgian gunmen and cut the approaching enemy with his sword. He also killed them with the fire of his gun. He fell dead on his gun. His last words were, "oh Lord, only help King Erekle escape this dreadful situation, and let me die for the welfare of my country". Another brave artilleryman – Major Gabriel was also killed there. 300 Aragvians fell in this unequal battle. They had sworn either to win or to die. The grateful Georgian people erected a monument to the heroes who had given their lives for their country in the place where the battles had taken place. Here the descendants of these heroes kneel before the names of those that have remained unknown to history.

It is true that Erekle was defeated in the battle of Krtsanisi, but it was not a victory of the ruler of Iran either. The Persians had lost over 13000 men, besides their aim was not achieved. Erekle II did not submit to Agha-Mohammed-Khan and did not break his contacts with Russia either. The infuriated Kajar fully revenged himself upon Tbilisi. He slaughtered thousands of the civilian population and razed the prosperous city to the ground. However, this did not help him to achieve success. Georgians defeated the Persian raiding detachments. King Erekle who had found refuge in Mtiuleti began collecting fresh forces. Information was brought from Ciscaucasia that a Russian army was coming to wage war against Persia. The startled Agha-Mohammed-Khan hurriedly left Tbilisi and returned to Iran.



The Last Years of Erekle's Reign

Two Russian battalions entered Georgia in December 1795, and in the spring of 1796, Russia's 3000 men army commanded by General Zubov, invaded Transcaucasia via Daruband (Derbent). It was officially declared that this warfare was arranged with the purpose of punishing Agha-Mohammed-Khan.

In spite of the tragedy that he had suffered, the elderly king had not lost heart. He began restoring order inside the country; he severely punished quite a great number of traitors, cheered up faithful allies, returned the population hiding in the mountains and began building Tbilisi, turned to ruins. He used all his personal property for this purpose. The construction works were taken care of by Prince Alexandre; as for Erekle, he had his court settled down in Telavi.

King Erekle subjugated Ganja again and punished her ruler severely for his treachery. He also restored the government of Mohammed-Khan, persecuted by the Kizilbashi, in Yerevan, and made him pay tribute as before. The offensive of the Russian army was also successful. Daruband, Quba, Baku, Shemakha were seized. The army also invaded Mughan, but on November 6th, 1796 Russian Empress Catherine II died and the new Emperor Pavel I who had ascended the throne banned the war against Iran. The Russian army was called back. Agha-Mohammed-Khan who had started for Georgia again was killed in Karabagh by conspirators on June 6th, 1797.

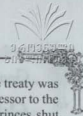
The internal situation became critical in Georgia again in the created conditions. The tavads became unruly again; the princes (king's sons) shut themselves up in their domains and did not obey their elderly father. Lezghins resumed their raids and it caused the Georgian peasants' leaving their dwelling-places, and merchants and artisans' abandoning their abodes.

The country that had seen so many hardships found herself in these hard conditions. At that very time the mainstay of the country, King Erekle II who was almost eighty but was still a great hope, died.

King Erekle II died in Telavi, on January 11, 1798. He was buried in Svetitskhoveli at Mtskheta. The greatest public figure of old Georgia, her magnificent commander and selfless fighter for the progressive future of the country died. He had spent all his life on reviving and renewing his country.

Giorgi XII. Annexation of Georgia by Russia

Giorgi XII, his eldest son, ascended the throne of the kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti after Erekle's death. But from the very beginning his brothers rose against him. This enmity was specially strengthened by Queen Darejan. As early as 1791 the Queen made the king adopt a law about inheritance, according to which the throne was to be passed not from father to son, but to the next elder brother. The matter was that Erekle had Giorgi by another wife, and the rest of his sons were Darejan's children. By this law, Darejan wanted her sons to inherit the throne. This was the reason of hostilities and distrust among the brothers.



Giorgi XII was compelled to acknowledge this law, but in 1799 when the treaty was renewed he made the Russian government confirm his son David as the successor to the throne. This was the cause of the rebellion of the King's brothers. The princes shut themselves up in their domains and did not recognize the King's rights. Prince Alexandre, Erekle's son, went to the Shah of Iran.

Giorgi XII was compelled to hire 1200 Lezghins to defend himself and at the same time he began to restrict the rights of the princes. He confiscated the estates of his stepmother Queen Darejan. This aggravated the situation among the adversaries. They did not avoid inviting foreign forces either. The Shah of Iran threatened to invade Georgia again.

There were other progressive forces in Georgia as well. They saw the future of the country in reforms. On May 10, 1799, Prince Ioane presented a project to his father about changing the state system of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti. Its realization would have extremely positive results for the country.

But this project was not realized. The King who was seriously ill by that time and frightened by the attacks of internal and external enemies, appealed to the Emperors' Court of Russia to change the terms of the treaty and interfere in the internal affairs of Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom, but leave the right to be kings to him and his descendants.

Emperor Paul I decided to take advantage of this situation and annex Eastern Georgia. New detachments of troops were brought to Georgia. It is true that the Emperor confirmed King Giorgi's proposals, but he sent a secret letter to the commander-in-chief of the Caucasian armies, General Knorring, in which he wrote that if Giorgi XII died his successor should not be allowed to ascend the throne and to be confirmed king. The State Council of Russia adopted a decree to abolish the kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti and incorporate it into Russia. Pavel I signed the respective manifesto on December 18th, 1800, but this decision was still kept secret.

In November of 1800 the ruler of Avaria Omar-Khan, encouraged by the Shah of Iran and Akhaltsikhe Pasha, invaded Kakheti with the army of 20000 men, Erekle's son Alexandre was with him. The Georgians together with the Russian army defeated them crushingly at the village of Kakabeti. The enemy fled from the battlefield.

Giorgi XII died on December 28, 1800. The Russian government did not confirm his heir David king of Kartli-Kakheti; they recognized him as a temporary ruler. In the meantime, a manifesto declaring the annexation of Georgia to Russia was published in St. Petersburg and Moscow, but Paul I was not destined to realize it. Conspirators killed him on March 11th, 1801.

The new emperor Alexander I studied this question again and finally a new manifesto about incorporating Kartli and Kakheti into Russia was published on September 12, 1801. This manifesto was announced in Georgia 7 months later.

Thus, the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti ceased its existence and was incorporated into the Russian Empire as "the Province of Georgia".

The Georgian people never reconciled with the idea of losing its statehood and fought heroically for freedom and restoring the national state for over a century.



Georgian Culture in the Second Half of the 18th Century

Science and education. The great cultural and educational activities that were so fruitful at the beginning of the 18th century became all almost paralyzed after Vakhtang VI had gone to Russia and hard times set in Georgia. A numerous group of people accompanied Vakhtang VI to Russia; these were mainly public figures – scientists, scholars and representatives of culture. They continued fruitful activities in Moscow: scientific and literary works were created in the Moscow Georgian colony, scientific and educational books were translated from Russian and European languages, and they were printed in the printing-houses, established there, and then spread in Georgia. However, as the Georgian public figures say it would have been more important to restore the cultural work in Georgia. Erekle II paid great attention to this question. He was supported in his activities by his cousin Cathalicos of Georgia, Anton, I.

Anton was an extremely well-educated person of progressive thinking. His philosophical points of view were formed based on studying the works of Aristotle and Plato and of the Georgian philosophers of the classical period – Ioane Petritsi and others. He also knew the ideas of his contemporary French and German philosophers very well. He translated “Physics” by the great German philosopher – enlightener Christian Wolff, “Logic”, “Metaphysics” and “Ethics” by Baumeister. Anton I wrote an original philosophic work “Precious Stones” (“Spekali”) which he dedicated to Erekle II.

Anton I thought education to be of decisive importance in the development of the nation. Therefore, he paid great attention to the translation of scientific and educational literature in his activities, and to compiling original textbooks. It was he who prepared “Georgian Grammar” – the first textbook of the Georgian language; he also wrote a manual of a philosophic-theological character. It was the first attempt to write the history of the Georgian clerical literature.

A whole galaxy of philosophers, scientists, scholars, writers and translators worked beside Anton I, for instance, Gaioz Rector, Pilipe Qaitmazashvili, Ioseb of Nekresi, Anton Tsagareli, etc. They both wrote original works and translated from Russian, Armenian and other languages. They also supervised education in Georgia.

Schools. Printing Houses. A theological seminary was founded in Tbilisi in 1755. Its first rector was Pilipe Qaitmazashvili - a very educated person of his time. Besides theology the Georgian language, grammar, philosophy, logic, physics, mathematics, singing (chant) were taught in the seminary. In 1758, a theological school was opened in Telavi too, turned into a philosophic seminary in 1782. Teaching was conducted by delivering lectures, and the teachers tested the students’ knowledge by means of exams. Erekle tried to send gifted and hard-working students to Russia and Europe to continue their education.

Apart from these state schools, many private schools appeared at churches and monasteries in the second half of the 18th century. Georgia of those days needed a great many educated people, and people knowing languages. It was necessary for governing the country, for diplomatic relations and military affairs. In 1799, Prince Ioane raised a question of the school reform and founding higher educational institutions in Georgia.

Schools and spreading education among the population, in general, required creating a great amount of respective literature and its spreading. And for this printing-houses were



necessary. In 1749, the printing-house was restored in Tbilisi. Books were published at a sufficiently high polygraphic level.

Georgian political thinking. Historiography. Novelties in political thinking in the second half of the 18th century prove the progress of the Georgian spiritual culture. More advanced ideas of European enlighteners gradually gained foothold alongside the old feudal ideology. The Georgians who had been in Russia and Europe were acquainted with new scientific and political ideas and then tried to adjust them to the Georgian reality and inculcate them in their country. From this point of view Alexandre Amilakhvari's (1750-1802) creative work is noteworthy. His treatise "A Wise Man of the East" is written based on West European thinking and is influenced by the ideas of the French enlightener Montesquieu. He dedicated this work to King Solomon I. In it the author described the state system that he considered to be the best, and advised the king to practically realize it. He also wrote "Georgian History", published in the Russian language in St. Petersburg. In this work, he writes about the history of Georgia, and about the conspiracy against King Erekle II in which he also participated.

The King's family members were also under the influence of the French enlighteners' ideas. For instance, the last successor to the throne of the Kartl-Kakheti Kingdom, Prince David, felt great respect for Voltaire, Montesquieu. He translated Montesquieu's "The Spirit of Laws".

The progressive development of the Georgian political thinking is seen in the project of reforming Georgia's state system compiled by Prince Ioane. In it, the author considers the following questions: Georgia's unification, the development of trade and industry, teaching and education. Ioane demanded that the *sacristavos* and *satavados* should be abolished, that the state government should be built according to new principles; a salary should be paid to all state officials, among them to the king and queen, etc.

Georgian historiography was also quite developed in the second half of the 18th century. This branch had reached great success as early as the first half of that century. It is sufficient to name the continuations of "Kartlis Tskhovreba" (History of Kartli), and particularly Vakhushti Bagrationi's scholarly and scientific activities, though Vakhushti had finished his work in Russia and the work reached Georgia late. The events of the 40-s and 50-s of the 18th century are described in Papuna Orbeliani's "Ambavni Kartlisani" (Stories of Kartli). It is a continuation of Sekhnia Chkaidze's work and ends with the events of 1758. The author himself is a participant of the events, described by him; he considers each event with great patriotic consciousness, and entertains great hopes about the activities of Teimuraz II and Erekle II.

Another historian who describes the events of the 18th century is Oman Kherkheulidze. In his work "Reign of Erekle II", he writes about the history of Kartli and Kakheti in a comparatively concise and dry style, but consecutively. He describes the events occurring from 1722 to 1795.

Literature and art. The historic-patriotic motif is still in the foreground of the 18th century Georgian poetry, the description of every day events and love lyrics occupy an important place too. The best representative of the Georgian poetry of this period is David Guramishvili (1705-1792). He himself experienced the disaster that befell Georgia. He was first kidnapped by Lezghins, and then he emigrated to Russia, but he did not lose interest in Georgia's troublous life. He followed the events, taking place in Georgia,



with a sober eye and gave a splendid description and analysis of all these happenings in his historical poem "Kartli's Tribulations". A poem of his is not only a brilliant artistic work, but also an important historic source. It describes the life of the Georgian people realistically. He knows that education is very important for both separate individuals and the country and tells young people to study hard. David Guramishvili called the collection of his works "Davitiani" and gave it to Prince Mirian, Erekle's son, who had arrived in Russia on a diplomatic mission, to take it to Georgia. He himself died in the Ukraine in 1792, far from his native country.

Another great poet, Besarion Gabashvili – Besiki (1750-1791), was a typical representative of the 18th century Georgian poetry. He had received a splendid education and was distinguished by a great talent as a poet. Alongside incomparable love lyrics, he wrote magnificent patriotic works, dedicated to most important historic events.

Tbilisi became a most important city in Erekle's epoch. It actually became the cultural and political center of the whole Transcaucasia. Its population was extremely multinational. The stratum of merchants and artisans, living in the city had their own way of life and ethical rules. A splendid oriental singer Sayat-Nova expressed the ideas and aspirations of this stratum of population. He wrote verses in three languages: Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani (in Georgian letters). Sayat-Nova was at one time a poet at King Erekle's court and he was very proud of it.

His love lyrics sound beautiful and have a specific character. His songs were sung accompanied by thari, duduki and other oriental instruments. His poetry is still loved and popular in our times.

At the end of the 18th century a theater was also founded in Tbilisi where performances were staged by professional and amateur actors. A well-known diplomat Giorgi Avalishvili translated plays and comedies from Russian. He wrote an original play about King Teimuraz and Erekle. Other authors also wrote and translated plays. For example, the king's Chief Magistrate – David Cholokashvili translated Racine's tragedy "Iphigenia" into Georgian in 1795. Many other plays were written in that period. The invasion of Agha-Mohammed-Khan and sacking Tbilisi put an end to the Georgian theater as well.

Georgia at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century

The Establishment of the Russian Rule in Eastern Georgia

Giorgi XII, the last king of Kartli and Kakheti, died at the end of December 1800, leaving Eastern Georgia without a ruler at the beginning of the nineteenth century. However, a far greater tragedy for the country lay ahead, for the days of the kingdom itself were numbered. The imperial court of Russia already considered the Bagrationis' rule redundant.

On December 18, 1800, while Giorgi was still alive, Emperor Paul I signed a manifesto abolishing the kingdom of Kartli and incorporating it into Russia. It is true that Paul did not



live to see the implementation of his manifesto — he fell victim to a palace plot — but Russia never diverted from his plan.

The commander of the Russian army in Tbilisi did not allow David, Giorgi's son, to ascend the throne. David hoped against hope that he would be bestowed either the title of king or at least, the title of the viceroy. He received neither.

In March 1801, the statute for the provincial governance of Kartli and Kakheti was already approved in St. Petersburg. The senate appointed General Knorring general-governor.

The new emperor, Alexander I, was more considerate towards the great powers of Europe. Thus, he tried to disguise his imperial aims by representing the annexation of Eastern Georgia as a sign of his concern for the well-being of the Georgian people. According to Alexander's instructions Knorring, after arriving in Tbilisi, did his best to prove to all that the abolition of the Georgian kingdom was the will of the Georgian society and not the political will of Russia.

A few members of the state council in St Petersburg intended to solve this question according to the law, but the majority yielded to the will of the Emperor and accepted the advantages of the incorporation. On September 12, 1801, Alexander I's manifesto was published, forever putting an end to the separate statehood of Kartli and Kakheti. The protests of Georgian diplomats, in speech and writing, could not change the situation.

Besides the favorable international circumstances for Russia, the complicated situation in Eastern Georgia itself also precipitated the abolition of Kartli and Kakheti Kingdom. The changing of hereditary rules by Erekle II triggered a life and death struggle between the princes. The kingdom, lacking unity and political firmness, became still weaker.

The Georgievsk Treaty, which Georgian politicians thought would be a shield against Muslim aggression, did not prove to be at all beneficial for the country. As for Russia, it paved the way to the south, using the status of an ally or protector to bring Russian troops into Eastern Georgia, which otherwise would have been possible only through fighting.

The Russian Empire, without any international opposition, used the right of the strong to capture the land of the small and weak country and destroyed a long-established sovereign kingdom when it made Kartli and Kakheti its province.

Alexander I's manifesto was read to the members of the Bagrationi royal family and the Georgian nobility at the Sioni Cathedral on April 12, 1802. It must be mentioned that the Russian army, ready to fight, surrounded the cathedral. When the assembled people were ordered to swear allegiance to the Russian sovereign, some of the nobles grabbed the hilts of their swords and were immediately arrested by the order of General Knorring.

The new governing body of Kartli and Kakheti was officially called "the Management of Georgia", but it did not differ at all from the management of ordinary provinces of Russia.

Russian management of Georgia began on May 8, 1802. General Knorring, with the rank of the commander-in-chief, was at its head. At the same time, he was the commander-in-chief of the Russian army in Georgia. General Kovalenski, as an assistant in civil matters, was appointed "Governor of Georgia." The management consisted of four parts: executive, civil, criminal and fiscal law. Russian officials headed them all. Representatives of the Georgian nobility were only their counselors.

The country was divided into new administrative units: districts. Three districts were created in Kartli: Gori, Dusheti, and Lore (with the centre in Tbilisi). There were two



districts in Kakheti: those of Telavi and Signaghi. The administration of a district was ruled by the secular police, the chairman of which was usually a Russian captain – *ispravnik* – (district police officer in pre-revolutionary Russia). The management of towns was the responsibility of Russian commandants and Georgian deputies or heads of the local police were their assistants. The language of both the justice administration and administrative management was Russian from the very beginning. In its essence, the Russian management was a military-occupational regime. Together with colonialism, it was forming the basis for the complete integration of Georgia into Russia.

All the strata of Georgian society met the imposition of the severe regime with alarm. The abolition of the kingdom humiliated the members of the royal family first and foremost. The loss of the throne united all the princes into one camp. The Bagrationis started to look for the ways and means of restoring their overthrown statehood.

A large number of noblemen, representatives of the oldest noble families, were against the new regime. They had lost their well-paid jobs in state or military service and now became subordinates, without any rights, to Russian officials. Georgian clergymen were also in restricted conditions. The treasury confiscated the major part of their lands and serfs.

Georgian peasants expected that the establishment of Russian management would cancel state taxes. They believed this to be a precondition of improving the situation of this poverty-stricken class, but their hopes were soon crushed.

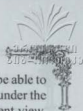
For the circle of merchants, which mainly consisted of non-Georgians, the new authorities seemed to be more acceptable. The destruction of old feudal customs houses within the kingdom promoted domestic trade, and the incorporation of Eastern Georgia into Russia facilitated the connection with the trade centers of the empire. However, soon there was discontent among the merchants too as the government imposed taxes on them as well.

The general discontent of the population was increased by the hard living conditions caused by the fall in the rate of exchange of gold and the deficit of silver, and all this created favorable grounds for the movement against the regime.

The Occupation of Western Georgia

After occupying Kartli and Kakheti, Russia actively tried to expand its domain in the South Caucasus. Commander-in-Chief Tsitsianov subjugated the Ganja, Karabagh, Shakh, and Sharvani Khanates one by one and greatly extended the borders of the empire in the direction of the Caspian Sea. Tsarism was also eager to pave the way to the eastern coasts of the Black Sea, where there still were Ottoman garrisons in town fortresses.

By that time the home and foreign affairs were rather complicated in Western Georgia. The country had not been a complete political unit for a long time. Adjoining the Imereti Kingdom there were the Samegrelo, Guria, Abkhazia and Svaneti Principalities. Solomon II, the king of Imereti, was nominally considered the owner of those principalities, but the recalcitrant princes did not recognize his sovereignty. The opposition between the king and the princes and the continuous rivalry between them did great harm to the country's unity.



It was clear to Solomon II that Imereti, alone with its own forces, would not be able to resist a Russian attack. That is why the king proposed putting Western Georgia under the protection of Russia to Alexander I. However, in Petersburg they had a different view. That is why the emperor did not take into consideration King Solomon's request and ordered Tsitsianov to occupy Imereti by military force.

To make the achievement of this aim easier at the end of 1803 Russia took Samegrelo, the principality in conflict with Imereti, under its protection. Now Tsitsianov had the opportunity to attack Imereti from two sides. Solomon had no choice but to consent to be subordinated to Russia. The relevant treaty was signed in April 1804. The king of Imereti preserved his hereditary right to the throne, but in fact his authority was extremely restricted.

Solomon could not reconcile himself to this and evaded fulfilling the conditions of the treaty. In 1806, a war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire broke out. Solomon tried to use this war in his favor and to restore the independence of the Imereti Kingdom with the help of the Sultan.

General Gudovich, Tsitsianov's replacement, was ordered to topple Solomon II from his throne. The old viceroy could not carry out this task. The new viceroy of Georgia, Tormasov, turned out to be more active. He called the princes of Guria and Samegrelo for help and in addition, brought two more battalions to attack Imereti.

On February 20, 1810, Tormasov declared the king of Imereti dethroned. For a month, Solomon II fiercely fought against the enemy. At last, he agreed to talks, but the Russians treacherously captured him and sent him to Tbilisi. The king managed to escape from prison and placed himself at the head of a liberation movement in Imereti, which spread wider and wider.

Russian authorities in Georgia removed some military units from the Iranian front and sent them to Imereti. Tormasov promised a considerable reward for killing Solomon II, but nobody wanted to do it. Russian officials themselves admitted that they could not find a single man in Imereti who would commit this disgraceful act.

The rebels fought bravely. They defeated the enemy several times, but in the end, they could do nothing against the more numerous invaders. The king of Imereti did not receive the expected help from Iran and the Ottoman Empire. Solomon II asked even Napoleon Bonaparte for help, but in vain. The struggle for freedom became hopeless. Solomon emigrated to the Ottoman Empire and died there in 1815.

After the invasion, the former kingdom was transformed into the Imereti Region and was subordinated to the Russian administration. The territory of the region was divided into four districts: Kutaisi, Vake, Shorapani, and Racha. At the head of the Imereti Region, there was a ruler. The districts were ruled by seniors. Only Russian officials occupied the posts of ruler and senior. Tsarism did not abolish other political units existing in Georgia then. In 1810, the Gurian Principality, like that of Samegrelo, was absorbed and became a Russian subject.

In the same year, Sokhumi was invaded from the sea. The prince of Abkhazia, Giorgi Shervashidze, was made to swear an oath of allegiance to the Russian sovereign and Abkhazia became subjugated to Russia.

There was a somewhat peculiar situation in Svaneti. Kvemo Svaneti was subordinate to Dadiani, the prince of Samegrelo, and was a subject of Russia from 1803. In 1833,



Russia subjugated Upper Svaneti i.e. all the lands owned by Prince Dadeshkeliani, and from 1840 Russia extended its power over the so-called "masterless" (free) Svaneti, the part of Svaneti which had never had a master or lord.

Russia's Colonial Policy in Georgia

The Persecution of the Bagrationi Royal Family

It was decided in St. Petersburg that the Bagrationis, the representatives of the overthrown royal dynasty, should not stay in their country as their presence nourished hopes of restoring the national statehood among the Georgian people. While the numerous descendants of the kings (Erekle II and Giorgi XII had fifteen children each) were in Georgia, the Russian sovereign could not live in peace. Moreover, the action of Kakheti princes made it clear that the Bagrationis wanted to return their lost throne and strove for the restoration of their dynasty. In such circumstances, the appointed vice-gerent of Georgia, General Tsitsianov, was instructed to use force if the princes would not leave Georgia voluntarily.

The emperor's court preferred to solve the problem peacefully, so as not to make enemies of the nobility that were loyal to the Bagrationis. The forceful exile of the princes would scare Muslim owners of the Southern Caucasus, and if some of the Khans did not avoid connections with Russia so far, they might keep their distance after such an action.

Both the princes and the queens, Darejan and Mariam, categorically refused to go to Russia. This time force was used. In February of 1803, Vakhtang and Giorgi Bagrationi, under escort of a special overseer and a military unit, were sent to St. Petersburg.

Tsitsianov was going to exile the last queen of Kartli and Kakheti, Mariam, by force too. General Lazarev tried to fulfil his task so rudely that he was killed by the dagger of the angry queen or of one of her retinue. Without any investigation Mariam — who herself was slightly wounded — was accused of Lazarev's murder and she was exiled as a criminal. Together with the queen, her six children and her stepson, Prince Bagrat, were sent to Russia. The queen spent eight years in prison. After that, she was permitted to live with her children in Moscow, but she was never allowed to go back to her country. When Queen Mariam died in 1850 her body, according to Emperor Nikolai I's order, was brought to Mtskheta and buried in state beside her husband, Giorgi XII, in Svetitskhoveli Cathedral.

Neither did the Russians listen to the request of Erekle II's widow, Darejan. The seventy-year-old woman was sent to far-away Russia. The queen did not live long far from her home, dying in St. Petersburg in 1807.

In 1804 Yulon was captured, and in October so was one of the leaders of Kartli Mtianeti, Prince Parnaoz. Both of these sons of Erekle II, fighters for the freedom of their country, were exiled from Georgia. Yulon was sent to Tula and Parnaoz to Voronezh. In 1806, they were released from prison and they joined their families living in Moscow.

Kartl-Kakheti royal family



Prince David



Prince Iulon



Prince Parnaoz



Prince Ioane



Prince Alexandre



Prince Teimuraz

Russian rulers of Georgia



General Lazarev



General-lieutenant K. Knorring



The infantry general
Prince Pavel Tsitsianov



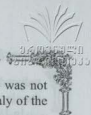
Count Paskevich



General-adjutant
Prince Mikhail S. Vorontsov



General-fieldmarshal
Prince A. Baryatinski



One of the sons of Erekle II, Anton II, who was Catholicos of Georgia, was not persecuted at the beginning but when Tsarism decided to annul the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, Anton was also ordered to Russia in 1810.

Teimuraz Bagrationi, the son of Giorgi XII, lived for some time with his uncle Prince Alexander, who had found shelter in Iran. When he came back to his country in 1810, he also yielded to the will of the authorities and left for St. Petersburg.

The heir to the Imereti throne, Konstantine Bagrationi, David's son, was also sent to Russia. Thus, after the annexation of Georgia, almost all of the members of the royal family were sent to various cities and towns of the Russian empire.

The first generation of the Bagrationis who settled in Russia were officially called "Georgian princes" (*tsarevichs*) and they had the honourable title of "their Highnesses". Their descendants were also referred to as "Georgian princes" or "their highnesses".

The heirs of the princes exiled from Kakheti were known by the name of *Gruzinski* (the Russian word for "Georgian"). The descendants of the Imereti branch of the Bagrationis were called *Imeretinskis*. All of them had to serve Russia either in civil or military service. Some of them earned great trust from the government and rose to high ranks. Over ten representatives of the Bagrationi family became generals in the Russian army. Others became famous writers, scientists, and so on.

The Abolition of the Autocephaly of the Georgian Church

Georgia is one of the oldest Christian countries. For hundreds of years as the secular Georgian government directed public and political life, the church was the spiritual leader of the nation, playing a crucial role in the national consolidation of the Georgian people, in the development of culture and education, and in the perfection of the morals of the society.

Some of the clergy shared the policy of a few Georgian politicians – to have close relations with Russia. The former cherished the hope that a country of the Orthodox Church, having the same faith as Georgia, would protect them from Moslem coercion. However, it was a vain hope.

After demolishing Georgian statehood, Tsarism attacked the church – the pillar of national self-preservation and spiritual culture. According to Alexander I's order, they abolished the Catholicos, throne of Mtskheta (Kartli-Kakheti) in 1811, and that of Abkhazia (Imereti) in 1814. The Catholicos-patriarchy was annulled. The autocephaly of the Georgian apostolic church was over. The Iberian church was subordinated to the Russian church council – synod – through a special department – the dicastery. The post of the Georgian exarch was established and it was made equal in its rights to the rights of a member of the synod.

Varlam Eristavi, a Georgian metropolitan working in Russia, was appointed the first exarch. The new bishop started transforming the Georgian church into the Russian mode. The property and incomes of the church were registered and given to the synod's ownership. Church nobles and peasants were transferred to the state payroll.

The clergy were deprived of lands and economy, their means of subsistence, and only had salaries paid by the synod. The number of Kartli and Kakheti eparchies was greatly



reduced: instead of thirteen eparchies, there were only two left following the reduction of the clergy.

In 1815, instead of the Georgian dicastery of the synod, the Georgia-Imereti synodal office was established, to which the authorities subordinated the churches of autonomous principalities – Guria and Samegrelo. All Varlam's successor exarchs of Georgia, were Russians. It was forbidden to hold church meetings in Georgian. Georgian parishes could celebrate only the days of Russian church saints and hold divine services in a foreign language – Russian.

The abolition of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church was not only an act of political violence but it was a brazen violation of canonic principles as well. The Georgian people could never reconcile themselves to it.

Social-Economic and Demographic Expansion

The aim of the colonial policy of Tsarism was to make Georgia an inseparable part of Russia. The autocracy acted using a well-known formula: "Georgian body, Russian soul." This policy of Russification was justified by the dictatorial government as their desire to help the Caucasian people to come out of the "Asian backwardness." They emphasized the role and mission of the Russian "enlightenment." The incorporation of non-Russian peoples into the "integrated and inseparable" Russia was declared as a great kindness by imperial ideology. Outwardly, the Russian Empire seemed to take care of those peoples as if it tried to improve the social structure of their economic life, but in reality, cleverly calculated measures were carried out to achieve the national degeneration and Russification of the "cared for" conquered peoples.

Russian secular institutions and church acted with enviable coordination to eliminate the traditions, language and cultural heritage of the colonial peoples and to establish everything Russian in their places. That was why the occupational authorities never tried to Georgianize the government or to adapt the political regime to the nature and customs of the Georgian people. What is more, Russian rule destroyed the old Georgian state system and from the very beginning ousted the Georgian language from the spheres of management and jurisdiction and so on.

The stability of the empire required the total submission of the occupied peoples. To achieve this aim, the tsarist government had worked out a whole system of economic and political measures. This system included the abolition of the traditional Georgian master-serf relations and the establishment of the social structures that were characteristic of Russia.

Because of the Russian rule, the Georgian feudal aristocracy lost its political strength at once. The autocracy now attacked the foundations of the aristocracy's economic strength. Noblemen were no longer under the subordination of princes and were equal to them legally. The demolition of principality systems, the separation of the large families of Georgian princes and encouraging the breaking apart of their family lands served the intended purpose: social restriction of the ruling class.

Tsarism immediately started the expansion of its social basis. Ecclesiastical noblemen with their serfs and lands were handed over to the treasury. The same was done with the



king's and princes' serfs. They now belonged to the category of peasants of the treasury. High taxes were levied on the numerous peasants belonging to their masters. The burden of the social exploitation became still heavier because of the national oppression, thus making conditions unbearable for the Georgian people.

The Russian administration intentionally hindered the growth of the Georgian economy by seizing and becoming the owner of all the country's natural resources. Instead of developing production locally, Tsarism supplied the factories and plants of the metropolis with the raw materials taken away from Georgia without paying for them and brought manufactured goods of low-grade to sell in Georgia and the Caucasus. Such relations made Georgia economically dependant on Russia.

The colonial policy of the autocracy was characterized by lobbying non-Russian peoples. The henchmen of the empire considered the occupied territories of Georgia to be the natural extension of the state frontiers and their property. The Russian aristocracy perceived this land as an additional source for their enrichment. And indeed, the best lands of the newly incorporated districts were given to the close relatives of the emperor, to Georgian landlords, to the Russian clergy and so on.

The demographic expansion, carried out by Tsarism in a colonial way, was especially hard on Georgia. By settling aliens in Georgia, the authority strengthened its support. The Russian government considered the colonists and migrants to be a force against the Georgian national movement as well as a means for rousing national and religious hatred.

The tsarist government of Russia worked out a plan to establish Cossak settlements on the Black Sea coast. It is true that this plan was not carried out, but the process of colonization did not stop.

In 1803, eleven thousand Armenians were brought from the Yerevan Khanate and settled in Kvemo (Lower) Kartli. In 1817-18, German colonists were brought to Georgia. In 1829 in the places of Georgian Moslems deported from Samtskhe-Javakheti, thirty thousand Armenians, refugees from the Ottoman Empire, settled. At the same time, fourteen thousand Armenians and Greek families were settled in Southern Georgia. From the inner provinces of Russia various kinds of sects — Doukhobors, Mallacans, Baptists and others — were brought to Georgia for permanent residence. From the late 1830s, Russian military settlements, filled with retired Russian soldiers and officers, began appearing in Georgia.

Such a flood of aliens upset the demographic balance to the detriment of Georgians, made historical parts of Georgia ethnographically mixed, creating a great danger to the unity and national stability of the country.



National – Liberation Movement in Georgia in the Early Nineteenth Century

The Conspiracy of Kakheti Nobles (Tavadz) in 1802

In July 1802, the first protest action was organized. In Russian official documents this event is referred to as “sabotage,” “rebellion” and “conspiracy.” There was talk that the Russian government was going to send Georgian nobility to Russia, abolish the institution of *mouravi* (manager of property) and recruit the local population. All this increased the agitation of the Kakheti feudal class.

The leaders of the conspiracy were the *mouravs* Ivane Andronikashvili, Oman Jandieri and others. Queen Darejan directed their action from Tbilisi. The palace of Erekle’s widow was a kind of headquarters. Almost all the princes took part in this movement; among them were Alexander (who was in Iran) and Yulon and Parnaoz – refugees in the Imereti kingdom. Catholicos Anton also sympathized with the conspirators.

The nobles strove to restore their lost rights, to bridle the impudent Russian officials and to force the withdrawal of Russian troops located in Kakheti. They started to collect signatures in demand of restoring the annulled kingdom.

The Russian administration was warned and soon started to take drastic measures. The armies were in fighting trim, and additional regiments and artillery were sent to Kakheti. Several suspected noblemen were arrested.

On July 24, 1802, part of noblemen swore an oath of allegiance to Yulon, Erekle’s son. They addressed a petition to the Emperor Alexander I, signed by 69 noblemen. The undersigned denied the idea expressed in the manifesto — that the Georgians rejected their king — and demanded Yulon’s ascendance to the throne. Essentially, it was a demand of return to the terms of the Giorgievsk treaty, which meant the restoration of the kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti.

The number of supporters of the conspiracy grew day by day. It was intended that the whole people would swear an oath of allegiance to King Yulon. The Russian government of Georgia realized that they had to deal with a serious political movement that endangered the safety of the occupational regime. They brought out army troops against the conspirators. The Kakhetians thought it preferable to avoid them. Some of them found shelter in the woods, others, in fear of reprisals, fled from their country and joined Prince Alexandre in Iran.

General Lazarev made the captured conspirators take the oath of allegiance to the Russian Emperor again.

The tsarist government did not intend to revise the empire’s Caucasian policy and change the chosen course. However, the rebellious mood of the Georgian aristocracy made them rethink it. They had to ease the occupational regime to some extent. The whole management was deposed from office, scores of rude and impudent officials, whose actions disgraced the regime, already disgraced as it was, were dismissed.

The political action of 1802 was the beginning of the Georgian national liberation movement. The conspiracy made it clear that the abolition of the kingdom in Georgia did not mean total defeat at all. The Russian government saw that it was not easy to subordinate Georgians, because Georgians would never give up freedom without fighting.



Insurrection in the Uplands of Kartli, 1804

The Russian colonial regime was a very heavy burden on the Georgian people. The peasantry, whose situation became unendurable because of social oppression, also rose against the autocracy. The lower strata of the population could hardly pay state taxes before and now they had to pay "to Russians" as well. The taxes grew and they had to be paid in cash, no longer in kind. The same heavy situation was in the uplands of Eastern Georgia too.

The Russian regime of rule, established with rough violence, turned out to be incompatible for the mountain people. The highlanders were used to a comparatively free and proud life; they could not stand the abuse of the government officials, their injustice, their wilfulness and their humiliating behavior. The just indignation and complaints of the population were considered a betrayal of the emperor, for which people were ruthlessly punished. Whips and lashings came into use. There were cases when women were yoked to a cart. Scores of people were beaten to death by soldiers. Many highlanders died of hunger, cold and in avalanches during endless highway repair conscriptions.

The reasons for the universal discontent were too many; a small pretext was enough to start the insurrection.

In 1804, Commander-in-Chief Tsitsianov decided to attack the Yerevan Khanate. He wanted Georgians to take part in this campaign and ordered an army mobilized. The highlanders refused to take part in the campaign and unfurled the flag of rebellion.

The rebels blocked the Dariali Gorge and the roads leading to Kavkaz (Vladikavkaz) and Tbilisi. This insubordination united the people of different parts of the mountains: Pshavs, Khevsurs, Tushs, Mokheves and so on.

There were about four thousand rebels. Their aim was to overthrow the occupational regime and to reinstate the Bagrationis on the throne. That is why they contacted the royal princes Yulon and Parnaoz, who were sheltered in Imereti, and called them to come to the mountains.

The rebels captured several military fortresses and strategic posts. The rebellion spread considerably. Even the villages in Troosi Gorge, inhabited by Ossets, joined it. The tsarist government was alarmed. The insurrection might spread in lowlands too, threatening Tbilisi as well. Alexander I ordered additional forces sent to Georgia.

As soon as Prince Yulon came to Kartli from Western Georgia, he was captured, but Parnaoz managed to escape the enemy and joined the rebels. His appearance encouraged the highlanders. Parnaoz took the leadership of the rebellion. He contacted his brother, Prince Alexander, who was in Iran. The latter promised to help him with the Shah's armies.

The local Russian government spared no money or rewards to win the rebellion leaders over, to break the trust among the rebels and to make them oppose one another. However, this treacherous ruse did not work well. The mountain people were not used to breaking oaths or betraying their fellows.

The rebellion was in its fifth month. Any delay might prove fatal and the Russian government took drastic measures. Tsitsianov was forced to raise the siege of Yerevan, return to Georgia and start for the mountains with his whole army.



The decisive struggle between the insurgents and the government army took place near Sioni on October 13, 1804. The rebels were defeated and the Russians captured Parnaoz.

The commandant tried to restore order, but the rebels in the mountains continued resisting. They were not going to surrender easily. The Russian government carried out cruel reprisals, arresting over 300 rebels and exiling many. The furious Russian army sacked and burned their villages.

The attempt to restore the Bagrationi Kingdom ended in failure when the Russians suppressed the revolt. Nevertheless, this mass rising did not pass into history without having had any positive consequences. It showed clearly and forcefully that the Georgian people wanted their own nation and that the best representatives of the Georgian people were still able to sacrifice themselves to the cause of freedom.

The 1812 Insurrection in Kakheti

From 1804, Russia was at war with Iran. Two years later, it started a war with Turkey as well. On both fronts, operations continued too long. The Georgian population was in a desperate, intolerable situation. Besides being conscripted into the army, the people were faced with oppression and torment by the transport tax and the task of providing the army with food.

In addition to the long-lasting wars, there was a poor harvest, as well as famine and plague which killed many people. In spite of the poor harvest, the peasants of Signaghi district were ordered to provide the army with more wheat than usual and at the lowest price. The people refused to sell wheat at such a miserable price. In answer, the administration sent a punitive expedition to the disobedient villages to destroy their gardens and vineyards, their last means of subsistence. Their homes were sacked and families cynically insulted. It was impossible to endure it any more, so the peasantry took up arms.

The uprising began on January 31, 1812 in Akhmeta and quickly spread throughout Kakheti. The rebels drove Russian detachments from towns and villages; they almost completely destroyed one regiment and took the towns of Telavi and Signaghi, blocking the roads leading to Tbilisi.

The mountain population actively supported the Kakheti uprising. Pshav-Khevsurs put Russian posts under siege and blocked the Georgian military highway. The flames of rebellion spread in Kartli too. Tbilisi appeared to be facing a blow.

The rebels invited Grigol Bagrationi, the grandson of Giorgi XII, to join them and declared him king. This fact clearly showed that the uprising had acquired a political character, that the final aim of the insurgents was to drive away the Russian administration and restore the abolished statehood.

Commander-in-Chief Marquis Paulucci returned from the Russian-Iranian front and started for Kakheti with troops and artillery. Paulucci ordered the rebels to surrender. They refused to obey him. After that, the commander attacked them with artillery. Prince Grigol fought against them bravely. According to the chronicler "Russians were overcome," but the artillery fire in the next attack shifted the balance in the enemy's favor. Prince



Grigol was captured and exiled to Russia. The rebels, without their leader, fought one more battle against Russians but were defeated and temporarily stopped resistance.

The viceroy had to make serious changes in the rule and order established by Russians. Instead of an *ispravnik* the institution of *mouravi* was restored, punitive expeditions were banned, and so on.

People watched these changes with suspicions, unsure that the government would keep its promises. Their suspicions grew when Paulucci was summoned to Russia in April 1812 and General Rtishchev was sent to Georgia to replace him.

The new viceroy felt that the fire of rebellion had not been completely extinguished in Kakheti and he sent additional troops there. Russian generals, using brutal force and promises of amnesty, managed to disband the rebels.

In the summer of 1812, the international situation changed drastically. In June, Russia, still at war with Iran, was invaded by Napoleon and his half a million soldier-strong army. The country found itself in a critical situation. Prince Alexander Bagrationi, Erekle's son, tried to use this situation to restore the sovereignty of Georgia. He immediately left Iran and returned to Georgia.

The appearance of the unbending prince in Georgia inspired the fighters for freedom. Kakheti immediately rose, and once more Pshav-Khevsureti rallied. Kartli also was ready to protest. All varieties of titles and social strata joined the movement. The number of rebels reached ten thousand, among them 1,200 Lezghins who came from Daghestan to help the Georgians.

The rebels attacked the government's armies several times and tried guerrilla tactics, but the better-armed enemy outnumbered the Georgians. The fate of the struggle was decided in favor of Russians. On November 26, the rebels were defeated in a decisive battle. Their army broke up and Prince Alexander escaped to Khevsureti.

Russians did not dare attack Khevsureti in winter, but in May of the next year, they raided the mountains with numerous armies and razed about twenty villages to the ground.

The rebellion ended when the last detachments of Khevsurs died heroically struggling against the enemy. It was their courage and self-sacrifice that saved the fighting royal prince, who, with his unsheathed sword in his hand, went to the North Caucasus. Thus, Prince Alexander survived, and with him, the hope and aspiration of fighting for freedom survived as well.

The 1819-1820 Insurrection in Imereti and Guria

From the very moment the Tsar deprived the Georgian church of its autocephaly, Tsarism started to transform it into the Russian style. The reform envisioned subordinating the church to the empire and increasing the income of the empire by appropriating church and monastery property.

The ecclesiastical changes were carried out in Eastern Georgia relatively painlessly, but in Imereti they were met with strong resistance. Metropolitan Dositeos Kutateli, who held a crosier of the Catholicos of Western Georgia as well, headed ecclesiastical life there. Together with the church leaders of the Guria and Samegrelo autonomous



principalities, he rose against the reforms. The representatives of all strata of the population who were discontent with the Russian regime shared the protest of the bishops.

In June 1819, a rebellion broke out in Imereti and spread quickly to other parts of Western Georgia, especially Racha. The grandson of Solomon I, Ivane Abashidze, the bishops Dositeos Kutateli and Ekvtime Gaenateli and others led the movement. The rebels' slogan was "For the Freedom of our Motherland." They declared Ivane Abashidze king of Imereti and the Georgian bishops appealed to the world Patriarch of Constantinople, asking him to take the local parish under his jurisdiction.

The governor of the Imereti region was unable to do anything against the wave of agitated people. Commandant Ermolov sent General Veliaminov with an army to help him. Several leaders of the rebellion were invited to negotiate, among them Dositeos Kutateli and Ekvtime Gaenateli, and they were captured by a ruse.

They put sacks on the heads of the imprisoned leaders and secretly took them away from Imereti. Bishop Dositeos died on the way and the others were exiled to remote provinces of Russia.

This and the cruelty of the punitive expedition caused universal indignation. The flame of the rebellion spread from Imereti to whole Guria. Gurian rebels seized and destroyed a Russian military unit and killed Puzirevski, the governor of Imereti. Samegrelo also echoed the rebellion. Rebels became active in Racha too, attacking the enemy and starting for Kutaisi.

However, there was no unity among the Georgian nobles. Some of them were frightened and surrendered to the Russian authorities. In the decisive battle, the rebels were defeated and the Russian army occupied Kutaisi. Ivane Abashidze left the battlefield and escaped to Turkey.

General Veliaminov cruelly punished the participants of the rebellion, burning their houses, destroying several fortresses, cutting down their gardens and vineyards, sacking and razing to the ground rebellious villages in Guria, Imereti and Racha. Commandant Ermolov boasted, "The country will not be able to restore her former conditions for many years, extreme poverty will be their punishment."

The Greek liberation movement, which took place almost at the same time as the Imereti uprising, found sympathy in the society of the whole Europe, but the Georgians uprising did not receive any such response. The echo of this rebellion, like the preceding ones in different parts of Georgia, did not pass the borders of the Romanov Empire, and it remained Russia's "domestic problem."

In spite of the defeat, the Imereti insurgence compelled the Caucasian administration to be careful while carrying out ecclesiastical reforms in Western Georgia. The implacable struggle of the Georgian nation, which lasted for many years, convinced the Russian government that it was necessary to consider some changes in their occupational rule.

The Conspiracy of 1832

The defeat of the people's uprisings during the first two decades of the nineteenth century convinced Georgian patriots that it was necessary to seek other means of struggle, to change their tactics, and to take into consideration the lessons of the



liberation movements of other oppressed peoples. Thus, in 1825-1826, secret organizations spiritually opposed to the Russian colonial regime were established in Moscow and St. Petersburg by Parnaoz, Erekle's son, Okropir Bagrationi, Giorgi's son, and Yulon Bagrationi, Dimitri's son. These representatives of Georgian aristocratic families continually discussed the fate of Georgia, watched contemporary social and political processes and studied other European or Russian struggles for liberation. Thus, the basis of the conspiracy of 1832 was the Georgian tradition of self-sacrifice for the motherland and the above-mentioned elements as well.

To free themselves from the yoke of autocracy, the conspirators were preparing for an armed rising, but it was an attempt based on a definite program — planned, organized and purposeful — that envisioned the sovereignty of Georgia. The participants overcame the aspiration of spontaneous uprisings; their ideas crossed the local boundaries of separate parts of Georgia and developed the general idea of the return of an independent state.

In 1827-1829, the centre of the conspiracy came to Tbilisi from Moscow. Alexander Chavchavadze, Grigol Orbeliani, Dimitri Kipiani and many others who had similar ideas joined the movement. Among them were women too: Princess Tekla, Tamar Bagrationi and others. Alexandre Orbeliani, Elizbar Eristavi and Solomon Dodashvili formed the core of the conspiracy. Alexandre was Erekle's grandson on his mother's side, Elizbar belonged to the oldest feudal family, and Solomon Dodashvili represented the peasantry. In spite of his low social origin, he had received an excellent education and was famous in the spheres of education and science. Solomon Dodashvili contributed greatly to the establishment of the Georgian newspaper *tibilis utskebani* (*The Tbilisi News*) and in 1832, he headed the journal *saliteruro natsilni tibilis utskebani* (*The Literary Parts of the Tbilisi News*).

The conspirators had connections with representatives of Western Georgian nobility, the heirs of the princes of Samegrelo and Abkhazia, the mountain people of the Northern Caucasus who fought for liberation, Prince Alexandre, who was in Iran at the Shah's court, progressive Russian officials, representatives of the French consulate in Tbilisi and with the Poles living in Georgia. They expected help from England and France as well.

For the sake of secrecy, the conspirators used a clandestine alphabet invented by the monk Philadelphos Kiknadze. He also formulated regulations for the conspiracy that defined the rights and duties of the members of the organization.

The conspirators intended to create an uprising among not only the nobility but also "the whole people of Georgia." They wanted to form regular regiments commanded by experienced leaders and so on.

However, they could not agree on a political model for the country's new government. They debated whether to reinstate a monarchy or not and they discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the republican system, though they preferred the idea of a monarchy limited by parliament (*Seim*).

The conspirators envisioned that the supreme power of Georgia would be a two-house institution. The upper house would consist of the king and ministers and the lower would consist of district deputies. They thought of inviting the crown Prince Alexandre to be the king and had even chosen candidates for ministers.

The national movement of Georgian patriots was in unison with the social and political events taking place in Russia and Europe and with the national liberation movement of



conquered and oppressed peoples. This would soften any international reaction, the pillar of which was the "Divine Union." The conspirators, opposition to the colonial regime of Tsarism reflected the general demands of the times and the progressive ideals of humankind.

The conspirators considered that the best for their armed insurrection was the beginning of the rebellion in Poland in 1830, when together with other military units, some parts of the army, stationed in Georgia, were sent to Warsaw under the leadership of Commandant Paskevich. However, the events developed quickly and unexpectedly. The defeat of the Poles subdued the enthusiasm of the Georgian conspirators and the movement slackened.

A favorable moment for unfurling the flag of rebellion was created by the complicated situation of Russia in the North Caucasus and a campaign by Rozen, the new commandant, against the highlanders. December 20 was chosen as the day of the uprising. The conspirators made up a concrete plan, "the order of the first night," which included details of attacks on strategic objectives as well as many other actions. However, in spite of having made so many preparations, the rebellion did not happen.

On December 9, Iase Palavandishvili, one of the prominent members of the conspiracy, informed upon them. Immediately the leaders of the plot were arrested. In the investigation documents, about 150 names of the suspects were mentioned, although their actual number was far greater. The investigation lasted very long. The prisoners were locked in military barracks, which is why this period in history was called, "the period of barracks."

The accused were divided into groups according to their crimes and brought to trial. In February 1834, a court martial in Tbilisi sentenced thirteen of the most active conspirators to death, but they were pardoned by the Emperor and exiled for different periods.

The soft-heartedness of Tsarism can be explained by several circumstances:

1. The crushing of the Polish uprising and the cruel reprisals that followed spoiled the reputation of the imperial regime on an international scale. Another act of bloodthirsty revenge would cause still more indignation in the progressive society of Europe. The tsarist government avoided increasing its infamy.

2. When the conspiracy was revealed, the autocracy continued military operations to subordinate the mountainous Caucasus. In this difficult fight, Georgian noblemen were a considerable support for the autocracy. Thus, the tsarist government could not cut off the branch it was sitting on.

3. The Russian government realized that it would never subdue Georgians by violence and punishment alone. By using compromise and forgiveness, it was possible to make Georgian nobles loyal. That is why the real essence of 1832 conspiracy was disguised. It was not declared to be a political action, but the evil intentions of a few *tavads* (noblemen).

In spite of the fact that the plot was exposed prematurely and it did not achieve its goal, the conspiracy of 1832 will remain a landmark in the history of Georgia. Its aim was to restore the statehood of Georgia, not separately in Kartli and Kakheti or Imereti, but in the whole country. The conspirators took the legacy of the spirit of the previous uprisings and brought the struggle for freedom to a higher level, as they included in it the idea of freeing the entire nation. The conspiracy of 1832 prepared a solid foundation for the new stage of the national liberation movement of Georgia, the flagmen of which were Ilia Chavchavadze and other *tergdaleuli*, i.e. people who had been educated in Russia.

Participants of 1832 rebellion



Alexandre Orbeliani



Elizbar Eristavi



Dimitri Kipiani



Princess Tekla



Solomon Dodashvili



Solomon Razmadze

Georgian writers and poets of the 19th century



Grigol Orbeliani



Alexandre Chavchavadze



Nikoloz Baratashvili



Vakhtang Orbeliani



Giorgi Eristavi



Rapiel Eristavi



The Wars between Russia and Iran and between Russia and Turkey in the First Third of the Nineteenth Century

War between Russia and Iran in 1804-1813

The extension of Russian state frontiers into the southern Caucasus aggravated relations between Tsarism, Iran and Turkey. These Moslem countries had divided the land between them long before and could not put up easily with the appearance of a new rival. England and France, who had their own aims in the Near East, were interested in ousting Russia from the region. The leaders of these countries encouraged the shah and the sultan to start a war against Russia.

In the spring of 1804, the Iranian government started to mobilize an army against the Russians. However, Tsitsianov forestalled them by attacking Erevan, the Shah's province, and laying siege to it. The commander-in-chief was accompanied by a detachment of Georgian nobles along with Russian military troops.

The war between Russia and Iran carried on with mixed success. The Iranians blocked the road connecting the Russian army to Georgia, thus inflicting great damage to the Russian Army. Baba-Khan could have used the anti-Russian insurgency that started in Kartli and the Kakheti highlands to his advantage, but because of the disturbances in Iran, he missed the chance.

In 1805 Abas-Mirza, the shah's heir, invaded Karabagh, but in the next attack he was unable to defeat the Russians and returned to Erevan. The next year Tsitsianov started for Baku, and had some success but he became the victim of this operation.

From the end of 1806, the situation shifted to Russia's disadvantage. Turkey declared war on Russia while Iran evaded peace negotiations.

Russia, oppressed by Napoleon in Europe, could not continue the war with Iran vigorously and for the time being chose a defensive strategy, but not before occupying Baku and Char-Belakan.

The Iranian army would appear in the Moslem Khanates from time to time, but avoided a direct fight with the Russian army. The shah was satisfied with sacking the defenseless population and gaining booty.

Together with the Iranians, Prince Alexander was also vigorously getting ready for coming to Georgia. He called his compatriots to a new insurrection and promised honors and rewards if they were victorious. The appearance of the royal prince, who was seeking to regain his throne, filled the Georgians with patriotic feelings and strengthened the movement against the Russian regime, but as Iranian support became weaker and weaker success of the movement became doubtful.

The Russian army in the Caucasus finally broke the Iranian resistance, first in the battle at Aslanduz in October 1812, and then by occupying the town of Lencoran in December.

The long-lasting war between Russia and Iran ended with the signing of a peace treaty in Gulistan on October 12, 1813. Iran recognized Kartli and Kakheti and Azerbaijan



Khanates as the property of Russia. Yerevan and Nakhichevan remained Iranian possessions. The Caspian Sea was under Russian control.

The War between Russia and Iran in 1826-1828

The heavy results of Gulistan peace treaty considerably weakened Iran's political influence in the Southern Caucasus. The shah tried his best to improve the situation. He made use of England's active support and started a war against Russia in July 1826. Abas-Mirza's 60,000-strong army invaded Karabagh and occupied Ganja. The Prince Alexander started for Georgia with Iran's cavalry. The Lezghins invaded Kakheti and the Khan of Yerevan threatened Kvemo Kartli. Tbilisi was in danger too. In a very short time Iranian armies regained part of the territory lost in the previous war and approached Baku, but their success was short-lived.

Commandant Ermolov managed to gather his dispersed forces and instead of following his previous defensive strategy, he boldly attacked the Iranians. In September 1826, Iranian Guards troops suffered a crushing defeat at Shamkhor. The Russians were victorious over Abas-Mirza's numerous groups as well, forcing them to retreat.

The Russian army launched military operations more actively from 1827 when instead of Ermolov, General Paskevich was appointed the commander of the Caucasian armies. Paskevich took Nakhichevan first and then took Yerevan by siege. In the battle for Yerevan, 600 Georgian warriors led by General Roman Bagrationi distinguished themselves.

This success enabled Russia to take the theater of war within the frontiers of Iran. It is noteworthy that a Georgian general Giorgi Eristavi crossed the river Araks with a small unit of Russians and Georgians and conquered the town of Tabriz in a surprise attack. As a sign of revenge on the age-long enemy, Giorgi Eristavi and his warriors danced a Georgian dance *perkhuli* in the Shah's palace, thus taking vengeance for the devastation of Tbilisi.

The occupation of Tabriz was the most important achievement in that war, tipping the scales in favor of the Russians. The Shah asked for a truce. An invasion of the Iranian capital would aggravate relations with England, so Russia accepted the offer.

On February 10, 1828 in the village of Turkmenchai a new peace treaty was concluded between Iran and Russia. The Nakhichevan and Yerevan Khanates became Russian possessions. In fact, Russia dominated the Caspian Sea too. The defeated Shah agreed to twenty million roubles in reparations.

Iran's defeat made it easy for Russia to conquer the historical part of Georgia-Char-Balakani (Saingilo) which after that became part of the Romanov Empire.

The writer Alexander Griboedov, the Russian representative at the shah's court, played a conspicuous role in working out the terms of the Turkmenchai Peace Treaty. Before leaving for Iran, Griboedov married Nino, the daughter of the poet Alexandre Chavchavadze, but the young diplomat did not live long with his wife. He became the victim of a mob of angry Iranians. He found his eternal rest on Mtatsminda Mountain in Tbilisi.



The War between Russia and Turkey in 1806-1812

After establishing the Russian rule in Kartli and Kakheti, Tsarism strove to take hold of Western Georgia as well while at the same time trying to act cautiously to avoid the possible complications with Turkey. For some time the treaty of alliance between Russia and Turkey was renewed, but conflicts connected with Georgia and other reasons led to tensions. The Porta was against the Russian establishment in Georgia, and by 1806, Russia was at war with Turkey.

Military operations were carried out on two fronts in the Balkans and the Caucasus. Count Gudovich was the commander of the Caucasian army, which moved in the direction of Poti and Akhaltsikhe-Akhalkalaki-Kars.

Georgians had fought many times in the wars of others, but this time their rallying under the Russian banner grew from their natural desire for revenge. Georgians and Russians, people of the same faith, were fighting against their historical enemy and if victorious, expected to reclaim Georgian territory seized by the Turks.

Russian military troops had victory after victory on the banks of the Danube. In the Aegean Sea, they destroyed the Turks' fleet as well, but the situation in the Caucasus was much more complicated.

The Tilsit peace-treaty between France and Russia was followed by a temporary truce between Russia and Turkey. The war resumed in April 1809. The military operations were somehow slack for some time, but when M. Kutuzov became the commander of the Russian Balkan army, the Turks suffered a crushing defeat.

In November 1809, the Gurian popular army defeated a Turkish detachment of nine thousand men that had been sent to reinforce the Poti garrison. Soon after General Dimitri Orbeliani, with the Russian army and a Georgian detachment, took Poti. In July 1810, the Russians occupied Sukhumi. In December 1811, they forced the Turks out of Akhalkalaki. Still more important were the victories of the Russian army on the Balkan Peninsula.

Russia could go further, but because of the war approaching from France she preferred to give up some parts of the occupied territories. According to the peace treaty signed on May 16, 1812 in Bucharest the war between Russia and Turkey was over. The Tsarist government returned to Turkey Moldavia and Wallachia, Poti and Akhalkalaki, but held onto Imereti and the Abkhazian principality. The eastern coast of the Black Sea from the Bzipi to the Choloki became a Russian possession.

The War between Russia and Turkey in 1828-1829

Inspired by the victory over Iran, Russia tried to solve its old problem with its second Moslem rival. The more so, as the sultan no longer fulfilled the conditions of the peace treaty and demanded that the Russians should leave Western Georgia.

In April 1828, Russia declared war on Turkey. Turkey called the entire Moslem world to join a holy war against Christians. Nevertheless, the international situation was more favorable to Russia. England stayed neutral while France and Prussia avoided aggravating their relations with Russia.



Military operations traditionally spread on the Balkans and the Caucasian fronts. Russian armies occupied the Danube provinces easily, but were unable to go ahead and started defensive warfare.

Russian attacks had more conspicuous results in Asia. In June 1828, Kars — the strongest citadel of the Turks — fell. In August, the Caucasian army corps under the command of Count Paskevich occupied first Akhalkalaki and then Akhaltsikhe. Turks were driven out of Atsquri and Artaani: Alexandre Chavchavadze subordinated Baiazet and the whole Pashalik to the Russian arms.

In all these operations, numerous Georgian infantry and cavalry detachments fought bravely side by side with Russian soldiers. Georgian officers and generals commanded certain detachments skilfully. The Georgian population played an important part in securing the rear. Georgian forces were delighted to enter the historical land of the southern part of their country that the Turks had seized and occupied centuries ago. All of Georgia celebrated the victory over the age-old enemy.

In this war, the Georgian and Russian army had to seize Poti once again. The occupation of the town of Erzurum by Count Paskevich and that of Andrianopolis on the Balkan front were of great importance. The Porta was under the danger of being completely destroyed.

European countries undertook the responsibility to mediate between the warring parties to save Turkey. The parties sat down at the negotiating table.

On September 14, 1829, Russia and Turkey signed a peace treaty in Andrianopolis. In it, the Black Sea coast from the estuary of the Kuban to Shekvetili was given to Russia. Particularly noteworthy are those articles of the treaty in which Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki and the whole Samtskhe-Javakheti became Russian possessions while in fact they were returned to their motherland — Georgia. Turkey finally gave up its claims on Western Georgia and recognized Guria, Imereti and Samegrelo as Russian possessions.

The reunion of Southern Georgia was a historic victory. This land was freed from the two hundred and fifty years of Turkish dominion, but a great part of Moslem Georgia remained in the Turkish hands (in the battle for Batumi the Russians failed).

The evidently positive result of the reunion of Samtskhe-Javakheti with the rest of Georgia faded to some extent because of the anti-Georgian policy of the tsarist government.

The result of this policy was that seventy-five thousand Moslem Georgians had to leave their ancestral homes and move to Turkey because of the unbearable conditions that had been created for them.

The Russian authorities in Georgia did not allow the Likht-Imereti Georgians to migrate to the newly reunited part and instead of them thirty thousand Armenians were brought from Turkey and settled there. To settle the foreigners at the outer borders of Georgia was a part of a long-range plan of Tsarism, which would show itself later.

On the freed territory of Georgia the Akhaltsikhe region was established, which later became Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki Mazras (districts) included into the Tbilisi province.



The 1841 Rising in Guria

In 1829, the Russian government abolished the formal sovereignty of the Gurian principality. After that the local council of *tavads* (noblemen) headed by a Russian officer ruled this part of Georgia. The council became subordinate to the Imereti provisional government.

In the administrative reform of 1840, the aim of which was further Russification of the region, the Southern Caucasus was divided into the Sakartvelo-Imereti Province and the Caspian District. The former Gurian principality was declared a Gurian District and was included in the Sakartvelo-Imereti Province. Russian rule started to work in Guria in full force.

The changes were carried out completely ignoring the standards of life, traditions and customs of the native people. The local nobility was entirely deprived of official positions.

The Georgian language was ousted from the spheres of management and law. Unprecedented bureaucracy and unseen formalism started to reign everywhere; the wickedness of immoral officials had no boundaries.

The national and social oppression made the hard life of the peasantry even harder. The population, who had small plots of lands and were oppressed by feudal obligations, found themselves in a harder situation because of the increased state taxes. The circumstances became especially unbearable after the legitimization of monetary taxes in 1841.

At that time the money used in the markets of Guria was commonly Turkish paper currency. The new Tsarist administration decreed that taxes must be paid in Russian roubles, which the peasants did not then possess. Rumors spread that compulsory military service would be introduced and peasants rose in revolt.

The insurrection began in the village of Lanchkhuti on May 12, 1841 when the peasants prevented the tax collectors from doing their duties and offered armed resistance to the representative of the government.

Each participant of the uprising swore an oath of allegiance to the common cause before an icon of St. George, and swore that he would sacrifice his life too. They established a headquarters to direct the uprising in which feudal princes Ambako Shalikashvili and Kaikhosro Gugunava, nobleman Abesa Bolkvadze and others played an important role.

The population, armed with daggers and rifles, were ready to agree to peaceful negotiations to achieve their goal, but the head of the district did not want to listen to them and sent an army to the villages. When the military forces appeared many peasants returned home and some found shelter in the woods. A three-hundred-man detachment led by the Vadachkoria brothers distinguished themselves.

The movement spread in the direction of Chokhatauri and Ozurgeti and in several villages of Imereti. The number of rebels grew day-by-day and soon exceeded seven thousand men. The insurgents occupied main strategic points. Almost everywhere, except Ozurgeti, rebels liquidated the official organs of government. The peasants intended to let the emperor Nicholas I know about the situation, by sending a deputation of *mamasakhlis* (heads of villages) to the royal court, but were not able to do it.



The civil governor of Imereti arrived in Guria twice, trying to find out the causes of the riot. He listened to the insurgents' complaints and even promised some compromise, but he could not calm the population.

The head of the Akhaltsikhe military district, M. Argutinski, was charged with the task of quelling the rebellion. The commander of the armies located in Daghestan, General Brusilov, was specially sent for and brought back to Guria. The Russian military troops consisted of over two thousand men.

The insurgents inflicted a defeat on Brusilov and forced him to retreat, but all the attacks on Ozurgeti failed. It is noteworthy that during the period when the insurrection was at its height, the Muslim prince of Kobuleti, Hassan Tavdgiridze, joined the Gurians who were fighting against the Russian occupational regime. He did not take part in the decisive battles, though.

The decisive battle was fought at Ozurgeti in September 1841. The insurgents' attack was not well organized. The enemy was better armed and had greater fighting experience. The failure of their attack and serious casualties shattered the insurgents' lines. Now they were defending themselves. Thus, it was not difficult for Argutinski to split the insurgents' ranks and defeat them.

The government captured fifty leaders of the insurrection and tried them according to military rules. A. Shalikashvili and K. Gugunava were sentenced to exile to Siberia and others were imprisoned for ten years in Russia.

Stories of Gurians' courageous opposition to the colonial regime were passed from generation to generation. The writer Egnate Ninoshvili made these events immortal in his work *Revolt in Guria* a noteworthy representation of Georgia's national liberation movement.

The 1856-1857 Samegrelo Peasant Insurrection

In the 1850s, peasant riots became frequent in Georgia. The actions spread widely after the Crimean War when rumors about the abolition of the serfdom in the empire made the relations between the serfs and their masters much more strained. The peasants refused to pay new and already existing taxes. Thus, social opposition increased. The courts were full of peasants and their complaints about the violence of their masters. There were more occasions when the serfs would leave their homes and run away, becoming outlaws. It was not uncommon that serfs would burn houses of their hateful feudal lords and, in some places, there were armed conflicts as well.

According to its scale, the insurrection of peasants in Samegrelo was a notable event. It began in the autumn of 1856 and continued until the August and September of the following year.

There were many reasons for the discontent of the lower social classes, but in the Samegrelo insurrection, the role of the Caucasian Russian administration was quite important. Tsarism planned to abolish the Samegrelo principality and the opposition of the local population against the government of the prince was favorable to them.

The Turkish invasion of Samegrelo during the Crimean War greatly damaged the principality. The prince and landowners tried to recover their losses by increasing taxes



and duties. If before the serfs, doing the work for the master, were fed by the landowner, now they had to feed themselves. The peasants who worked on the reconstruction of the burnt Dadiani palace were made to pay even for grinding maize. The peasants refused to continue working and rallied in protest.

The leader of the rebellious peasants was Kocha Todua, an artisan. Soon about a thousand men from adjacent villages joined them. The peasants swore that they would continue fighting until they were free from the yoke of their masters.

At the beginning of 1857, the insurrection raged in the whole of Samegrelo. The number of insurgents was over 10,000. The armed forces of the peasants had several leaders, namely: Utu Mikava, Martalia Todua, Levan Kvaratskhelia and others.

The insurgents, after occupying towns and villages, would invade the estates of landowners, such as the Dadianis, the Apakidzes and others. They freed the peasants from taxes and duties, annulled the inhuman methods of punishment, and so on. Some frightened landowners did everything that the armed peasants demanded without a word, some escaped to Svaneti while others found shelter in Abkhazia.

In April of 1857 Ekaterine Dadiani, who had returned from Russia, addressed the insurgents in writing and called them to peace. The peasants paid no heed to their queen's appeal and attacked Zugdidi on May 12, occupying the main residence of the prince. The power was in the hands of insurgents.

The queen informed the Russian administration of Georgia and asked for help. Following the order of Viceroy Bariatsinski, General Kolyubakin, the military governor of Kutaisi, started for Samegrelo with regular military troops. At first, he wanted to frighten the insurgents but failed.

Utu Mikava explained the reasons for the peasant's insurrection to the general and presented a list of demands. In Kolyubakin's opinion, the peasants' demands were of a revolutionary character, but he had to take into consideration the great number of the insurgent troops and promised the rebels to restore justice if they went to their homes.

Kolyubakin did not hurry to act and tried to use the insurrection as the basis for abolishing the autonomy of the principality. On the other hand, the peasants did not even think of submission. The government representative did not keep this promise either, so the insurrection renewed and spread even more widely.

On May 27, General-Governor Gagarin himself arrived in Zugdidi. He summoned reinforcements from Kutaisi and Sukhumi and ordered the capture of the leaders of the revolt, the dispersal of the peasant forces without any negotiations. This command aggravated the situation. The insurgents had to fight against not only their own masters but the military troops of the government as well. In some clashes, they were victorious over the Russian army, but they also suffered a few defeats and retreated.

The viceroy informed the Emperor Alexander II about the circumstances.

Finally, Queen Ekaterine was pushed from power. In 1875, provincial Russian rule and management were established in Samegrelo and General Kolyubakin was placed at the head of the government. He was also responsible for the final liquidation of the revolt. It took the government army six months to suppress the insurrection. The peasants fought bravely but in the unequal battle, their resistance was finally broken.



The government ruthlessly punished the peasants fighting for social freedom. All the leaders of the insurrection were captured and deported to remote Russian provinces. Utu Mikava was sent to Archangelsk for ten years, returning to his country only in 1867.

The insurrection in Samegrelo contributed greatly to the further development of peasant protests. The extension of the movement was strong evidence that the system of serfdom was in an acute and serious crisis.

The Abolition of the Principalities of Guria, Samegrelo, Svaneti, and Abkhazia

Russia did not abolish the principalities existing in Western Georgia immediately after conquering the Imereti kingdom. Tsarism took Samegrelo, Guria and Abkhazia under its protection, and later extended its political influence into Svaneti too. The existence of principalities, even only formally, meant the continuation of the traditional Georgian nation. Tsarism put up with these circumstances for some time, but when Russia's position in the region was more stable, such a form of the local rule became incompatible with the autocracy's Caucasian interests. The liquidation of Guria Principality was the first item on the agenda, which was connected with the 1828-29 war between Russia and Turkey.

After the death of Prince (*mtavari*) Mamia Gurieli, his widow, Sopio, ruled the principality from 1826. The Russian administration of Georgia interfered in Sopio's activities brutally and abased her rights. The people of Guria, indignant, publicly expressed their protests. Because Tsarism was waging war against Turkey, Sopio Gurieli's position was considered to be a betrayal of the government and they started to carry out their long-standing plan to abolish the principality.

In the autumn of 1828, Russian troops occupied Guria and Sopio, together with her heir, fled to Turkey. In order to save the principality she tried to get in touch with the emperor of Russia but in vain. The war ended with the Russian victory and this fact finally decided the fate of the Gurian principality. By the order of the Emperor Nicholas I the Gurieli rule was abolished in December of 1829 and the autonomy of the principality was ended.

After the administration reform, carried out in 1846, Guria, under the name of the Ozurgeti district was subordinated to the Kutaisi Province.

Tsarism rudely violated the treaties concluded with other principalities too, and limited the rights of princes gradually. In 1837, the tsarist government subordinated Tsebelda, which had belonged to Abkhazia, and in 1840 seized Dadiani's Samurzakano together with the coastline.

In 1856, the peasants in Samegrelo revolted. At that time, the administration of the principality was entrusted to Ekaterine Chavchavadze – the widow of the deceased *mtavari* David Dadiani. Ekaterine appealed to the Russian government to stop the rebellion. Additional troops of the Russian army were brought to Samegrelo. The government proposed that Ekaterine leave Samegrelo and decided to establish Russian rule there, but the Queen of Samegrelo was against leaving the principality. Eventually she was given



hope that when her young heir became of age he would be appointed *mtavari* of the principality. Ekaterine was invited to live in St. Petersburg.

On September 27, 1857, a provisional government was established in Samegrelo and General Kolyubakin became the leader of the government. The principality was factually abolished.

In 1867, the official heir was forced to renounce his right of *mtavari*. The tsarist government gave him one million roubles in return as compensation and conferred the title of His Highness Prince Mingreli on him. The former principality was divided into the Zugdidi, Senaki, and Lechkumi Districts and was subordinated to the administration of the Kutaisi Province.

One part of Zemo Svaneti (Upper Svaneti), the so-called *Sabatono Svaneti*, (Master's, Svaneti) was ruled by Prince Dadashkeliani. In the feudal house of the prince, two branches of the Dadashkelianis contended with each other for power. Their conflict made it easy for Russia to achieve its objectives.

In 1857, the military troops of the empire invaded Svaneti. Konstantine Dadashkeliani did not want bloodshed and presented himself in the camp of the Russian army voluntarily. He was captured and sent to the general-governor of Kutaisi. From Kutaisi, according to the viceroy's order, he was to be exiled to Yerevan.

Governor Gagarin did not allow Konstantine to say good-bye to his family and wanted to disarm him. The proud *tavad* killed the tyrant general and his two officials with his dagger and escaped. Konstantine was captured soon and sentenced to death.

In 1857, the independence of Svaneti was abolished. The representative of Dadashkelianis' second house, Tengiz, was also forced to abdicate.

From 1858 onward, Free Svaneti also became a Russian possession. The whole Zemo Svaneti (Upper Svaneti) was turned into the area of one district police office and was integrated into the Racha district.

During the Crimean War, Prince Mikheil Sharvashidze, a subject of Russia who had been ruling Abkhazia since 1823, was accused of treason. Viceroy Muraviov used this fact in his actions against the autonomy of the principality and intended to abolish it, but the emperor thought it better to refrain from finally conquering the highlands of the Western Caucasus.

In the spring of 1864, Tsarism successfully ended its long-lasting war to conquer the highlanders of the Northern and Western Caucasus. Now it was the turn of the Abkhazian principality. Prince Mikheil Sharvashidze, who was seriously ill, sought to make his heir prince, but he received a flat refusal from the government. What is more, in June of 1864 the government issued a decree that the Abkhazian principality was abolished and that a Russian "provisional people's government" was established in its place. Mikheil Sharvashidze dared not oppose this decision of the empire and he himself told his people about it.

The prince, deprived of everything, was not allowed even to stay in his country. In November of 1864 he was exiled from Georgia. Instead of the Abkhazian principality, the Sukhumi district was created which was subordinated to the Kutaisi province.

By establishing the Russian rule in Abkhazia, Tsarism finished the political conquest of both Georgia and the Caucasus.



The Abolition of Serfdom in Georgia

Feudal relations in Georgia were historically different from those of master and serf relations in Russia. By the 1840s and 1850s, the Russian autocracy had managed to level it and merge it into imperial serfdom structure. Georgian peasants found themselves in the position of Russian serfs (*krepostnoi*). Besides the burden of social exploitation, Georgian peasantry had to bear the burden of a national oppression as well, making their situation even more unendurable.

The peasantry could not reconcile themselves to being without lands or with the extreme limitations of their freedom. They realized that the only way to freedom was struggle. The peasant movement for social liberation became more and more of mass character. Progressive Georgian intelligentsia also raised their voices against the injustice of serfdom. They, in their works and activities, revealed the disadvantages and faults of such social inequality and criticized the existing stagnate social structure severely, thus forming an anti-serfdom ideology.

The feudal relations between master and serf were in deep crisis across Russia. Tsarism was compelled to consider seriously the question of transforming this obsolete institution and on February 19, 1861, Alexander II signed a manifesto abolishing serfdom in Russia. According to this reform, peasants became free, however their lands remained in the hands of old owners. Former serfs were given a certain plot of land for them and their heirs to use. This plot of land was called a *nadel*. A peasant had the right to buy this plot of land, but until he paid the whole sum for it he was levied with the prereform taxes. Those peasants who owned more land than a *nadel* lost the 'extra' part of it.

The abolition of serfdom was a significant event in Russian social life, but it did not affect Georgia. The Tsarist government was going to carry out the peasant reform on the peripheries only after implementing it in the center.

Georgian feudal aristocracy did not welcome this intention of the Tsarist government. At first, they considered the reform to be an unjust and "greatly deplorable" fact, as the liberation of peasants was seen as an encroachment on their livelihood, but when they realized that the abolition of serfdom was necessary and imminent, they tried to benefit by it.

The congress of the Tbilisi province nobility asked Dimitri Kipiani, a prominent public figure, to prepare a plan for peasant reform. Dimitri Kipiani had a special questionnaire to find out the landowners' opinion. The absolute majority of the landowners (i.e. the majority project) were for emancipating the peasants without lands, and demanding high compensation for their loss. The so-called minority project, which was represented by fourteen Georgian landowners independently, was as conservative as the majority project. The only difference was that the minority recognized the right of peasants to their domestic animals and some part of immovable property. The nobleman Konstantine Mamatsashvili demanded that peasants be given not only freedom but also those lands that they had factually owned before the abolition of serfdom.

Ilia Chavchavadze showed the correct solution to the problem. He denounced the practice of depriving the peasants of lands that were more than a *nadel* and the establishment of temporary liability. He demanded the liberation of the peasants who owned land; he also demanded annulling all those conditions that connected the former master and the serf by force.



The administration disapproved of all the suggestions of the Georgian nobility and approved a plan that repeated the articles of the reform carried out in Russian provinces.

On October 13, 1864, the government issued a decree about the emancipation of serfs from bondage in the Tbilisi province. In the province of Kutaisi (Imereti, Racha, and Guria) serfdom was abolished in 1865. Agrarian changes took place in the Eastern Georgian regions inhabited by non-Georgian peoples – Azerbaijanis and Armenians — in the 1870s.

According to the regulations, peasants were given lands not as their property, but for “permanent” use; a former serf could buy the *nadel* allotted to him and become the owner of it instead of being temporarily liable, only with the agreement of the landowner.

Unlike in Russia, *nadel* in Georgia were much smaller: 3.4 *dessiatina* (2.7 acres) on average. The reform took away more from the Georgian peasants than it gave them, especially as petty masters were released from giving any allotment to peasants. The latter were not given for personal use wood, pasture, or a hay-field and had to pay heavy taxes for using them again.

It must be noted that temporary liability lasted a long time in Georgia. It was formally annulled in 1912, but in practice remained in force until the overthrow of the Tsarist government.

The peasant reform was carried out with some peculiarities in Abkhazia and Svaneti. In Abkhazia temporary liability lasted for four years. After that a peasant became an emancipated person. As for a Svan peasant, he was transferred to the category of landowner immediately after the reform. His personal plot and the arable land became his property, but the *nadel* here was rather small, not more than 1.6 hectares. The treasury paid Svan nobles double compensation: for each emancipated peasant they received fifty roubles.

The abolition of serfdom did not greatly change feudal landownership in the Russian Empire. The reform was carried out in Georgia according to the interests of landowners as well. A serf-peasant had personal emancipation, but his economic situation did not improve. What is more, it became considerably worse.

The emancipation of the peasants had positive results as well: the abolition of serfdom facilitated the establishment of bourgeois relations and stimulated and facilitated the progressive process of the social and economic development of the country.

Bourgeois Reforms

After the peasant reform, Tsarism carried out bourgeois transformations as well in the elective district council court, rural and urban administration, military, financial and other spheres. In the outlying districts, namely in Georgia, the Tsarist government refrained from carrying out some of these reforms, explaining that the local population was not prepared for them.

In the life of a nation, which does not have statehood, the establishment of the elective district council was of special importance. The aim of the elective district council reform was to establish representative bodies in the districts and provinces to manage economic affairs. The participation in these institutions of the local administration would awaken the dormant consciousness of statehood, increase civil duty, and foster social initiatives



and so on. That is why Ilia Chavchavadze saw in the elective district council the "strength of kindness," and together with other avant-garde Georgian public figures did his best to establish the elective district council in our country too.

The Tsarist government did not take into consideration justice in Georgia and Georgia remained without the elective district council.

The Reform of the Agricultural Administration

The abolition of serfdom was followed by fundamental changes in the agricultural administration system in Russia. From 1865 onward, rural administration bodies called the Social Management of Rural Economic and Administrative Affairs began to appear in Georgia too. Their duty was to see to the collection of taxes, education, health care, to meet the social demands of the people and so on.

The highest directing body of the social management was the village congress, and the executive function was the responsibility of *mamasakhლის* (village elders) and their deputies, who were elected for three-year terms. The village office was managed by a clerk, state taxes were collected by a special clerk called a *gziri*. Peasant courts were established by means of elections to administer justice. Peasants were to pay all the expenses of social administration; this created serious difficulties, especially in poverty-stricken villages.

In spite of its faults, this new system of rural management had positive results. Elementary schools, libraries, reading-halls and pharmacies were opened in many places; village roads, bridges, ferries, and so on, were built or repaired. Rural management fostered the social activities of the rural population, as well as the development of the civic culture and promotion of active people.

Court Reform

Even in the 1860s, the Russian legal system was a class-based institution. Justice totally depended on the government and police. Judges were appointed only by the administration and investigation was only the prerogative of the police.

In 1864, Alexander II approved new court regulations based on bourgeois principles in which the justice system was given certain independence. The class court was abolished and court institutions common to every class were created. The election of judges and barristers was introduced. Legal proceedings became open and public, the number of court instances was reduced, and so on. It was the most democratic and consecutive reform, but in Georgia it was carried out only in a limited form and came in force from 1868.

Neither the institution of barristers nor the elections of judges were introduced in Georgia. In the reformed court, legal proceedings were still conducted in the Russian language, which the population did not understand. The progressive Georgian public demanded the reorganization of the court and the introduction of the institution of barristers, but without any result.



The Reform of the Urban Government

In 1870, the emperor signed new regulations in which cities and towns of the empire were granted the right to form a self-government called a *Duma*. Every inhabitant of a town who paid taxes could take part in the election of deputies. The class elective system was abolished, but property qualification remained in force, which had a decisive importance in voting.

Urban government reforms began in Georgia in 1874, first in Tbilisi. After elections, there were seventy-five deputies in the deliberative assembly. Their chairman was the head of the city. The main functions of the self-government were to regulate the municipal economy, collect taxes, improve the external appearance of the city, open educational and health centers, and so on.

In 1875 and 76 self-governing bodies were elected in Kutaisi, Gori, and Akhaltsikhe, in 1882 in Poti and Batumi in 1888. Later limited self-government was gained by Telavi, Signaghi, Dusheti, Akhalkalaki, Ozurgeti, and Sukhumi.

Self-government bodies were not free from the arbitrariness of the State apparatus. Governors and other officials often interfered in their affairs, but the self-governments gave a wider range to the activities of progressive people. Skilful and knowledgeable heads of cities and towns (such as Dimitri Kipiani in Tbilisi and Niko Nikoladze in Poti) by using the municipal budget wisely did a lot for organizing public services and amenities, for improving the living conditions of people, and so on. Especially improvements were conspicuous in Poti, which became a European-standard port town through the efforts of its head, Niko Nikoladze.

In spite of the limitations, the peasant reform and further transformation paved the way for the bourgeois development in Georgia and greatly facilitated the progress of the nation.

A new Stage of the National Movement: the Tergdaleulni

The national liberation movement that started in Georgia at the beginning of the nineteenth century and expressed itself in people's riots and insurrections did not stop during later periods. It developed especially at the beginning of the 1860s, when Ilia Chavchavadze and his companions appeared in the social arena. This generation of public figures is called the *Tergdaleulni*, or "Georgians of the Sixties." At the core of the *Tergdaleulni* were Ilia Chavchavadze, Akaki Tsereteli, Kirile Lortkipanidze, Niko Nikoladze, Iakob Gogebashvili and others, who had pursued their studies on the opposite bank of the Terek River, that is, in Russia, and returned to Georgia united with an idea of faithfully serving their country. Later representatives of a younger generation joined them: Sergei Meskhi, Vazha Pshavela, Ivane Machabeli, Alexandre Kazbegi, and others.

The *Tergdaleulni* was not a political union based on special regulations or programs. It was an ideological and social movement. Its members had in common love of their country and the desire to fight for national liberation. They were imbued with this aspiration while still studying in St. Petersburg University.



Ilia Chavchavadze worked out the plan for liberating the Georgian nation from the colonial yoke of Tsarism. He knew that it was impossible to free Georgia from Tsarism immediately. To achieve freedom it was necessary to prepare the nation properly and to have a reasonable policy. That is why Ilia Chavchavadze did not call the Georgian people to rebel immediately. First, he set the objective of awakening the national consciousness and of regaining the forgotten identity to secure the divine triad – motherland, language, religion. Ilia expressed the aim of the national liberation movement laconically – “We must be masters of ourselves”, which meant the freedom and reinstatement of sovereignty of Georgia.

The Georgians of the 1860s had to overcome many difficulties before they could understand their national ideology, recognize the *Tergdaleulni* as the leading social and political force and follow them.

When Ilia Chavchavadze and his companions returned to Georgia, there was only one periodical: *Tsiskari*. The people around *Tsiskari* were of a conservative disposition and looked with distrust at new ways of thinking.

The dispute about the language and literature that Ilia Chavchavadze began with the conservative camp of *Tsiskari* grew into the conflict between the older and younger generations that is known as the fight between “Fathers and Sons.” The struggle between them passed the boundary of the language and became a controversy of ideology and world conception between the two generations, ending in a victory for the *Tergdaleulni*.

The journal *Sakartvelos Moambe* made a notable contribution to the Georgian national ideological propaganda. Ilia Chavchavadze founded it in February 1863 and edited the monthly publication for a year. It was the beginning of *Tergdaleulni*’s journalism, which was continued by the newspaper *Droeba* (*Times*) from 1866, by the magazine *Krebuli* (*Collection*) from 1871 and by Ilia’s *Iveria* (1877).

The periodicals awakened and stirred public opinion and facilitated the development of people’s consciousness and national consolidation. In spite of the fact that censorship was strict and banned expressions of the truth, the Georgian press became one of the effective parts of the liberation movement all the same.

One of the important problems was how to increase literacy among the people. In a country that once used to boast of the Gelati and Ikalto Academies, in the middle of the nineteenth century it became necessary to spread knowledge of the Georgian language. It is true that there were some high schools, boarding schools, girls’ schools and seminaries. However, teaching in the majority of them was in Russian and they served mainly the interests of the autocracy.

In 1879, the leaders of the national movement founded a society to spread literacy among the Georgian people. The leader of the society was Dimitri Kipiani at first, but then, from 1885 Ilia Chavchavadze headed it. Through the efforts of the society some elementary schools, libraries and reading-halls were opened in the towns and villages of Georgia and literary evenings and public lectures became a tradition.

Iakob Gogebashvili’s name will always be linked with the renewal of Georgian pedagogy. His stories for children, the undying *Deda Ena* (*Mother Tongue*), *Bunebis Kari* (*A Door to Nature*) and other manuals served to raise the younger generation with patriotic feelings. These books, even today, remain spiritual guides for Georgian children.



Ilia Chavchavadze



Akaki Tsereteli



Vazha Pshavela



Iakob Gogebashvili



Niko Nikoladze

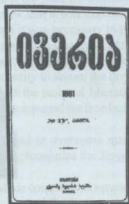


Kirile Lortkipanidze

Georgian Magazines and newspapers



"Tsiskari"



"Iveria"



"Sakartvelos Moambe"



"Droeba"



"Tsnobis Purtseli"



"Jejily"



"Kvali"



Georgian theatre, restored and renovated on the initiative of the Georgians of the 1860s, contributed greatly to the implementation of the *Tergdaleulni*'s national program.

Public education, theatre, press, or any other great national initiatives required money. Ilia Chavchavadze and his companions established nobility estate banks; some part of the profit of these banks went for education and Georgia's cultural restoration.

The *Tergdaleulni* thought the only guarantee for the liberation and restoration of Georgia was national unity, rallying of the whole nation around one common idea. They preached the necessity of consolidating the Georgian nation and undertook the task of reconciling opposing classes and uniting all of the social layers of Georgia.

The *Tergdaleulni* did a great deal of good for their motherland. They not only showed the way to national and political freedom but also paved the way for future generations.

In Georgian history, there is an opinion that there were two branches of the *Tergdaleulni*, that in the 1860s Niko Nikoladze, Giorgi Tsereteli, Sergei Meskhi and others separated themselves from Ilia Chavchavadze and his followers and took a different path. Such an idea was first expressed by Giorgi Tsereteli in 1894 and this was the beginning of the so-called "estates' theory," which later was shared by the Georgian Soviet historians.

It must be mentioned that G. Tsereteli's opinion seemed unacceptable from the very beginning to Ilia Chavchavadze, Akaki Tsereteli, Giorgi Laskhishvili, Niko Lomouri and other public figures. Archil Jorjadze and many other researchers rejected this opinion quite convincingly, but it continues to have some believers.

There are no documents illustrating such a division and there have never been any. G. Tsereteli's opinion was based on his and Niko Nikoladze's disagreement with Ilia Chavchavadze. Otherwise, there was no ideological or organizational dissidence among the Georgians of the 1860s. The *Tergdaleulni* were seeking ways of transforming the present and of creating a better future. They discussed the ways, debated (often rather heatedly) about the tactics to be used or expressed different opinions about the economic or social development of the country. Nevertheless, their different ideas and various opinions do not give us any ground to speak about the division of these ideological and social trends into different branches.

The 1877-1878 War between Russia and Turkey and the Restoration of Southwestern Georgia to Georgia

After establishing its power in the Caucasus, Tsarism turned its gaze to the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits, to the Porta's domains in the Middle East and Europe. Aside from purely strategic reasons, there were economic motives as well. In the post-reform period, the Black Sea had become of vital importance for the Russian trade in the East.

A weakened Turkey could not resist Russia's attacks alone, but was reluctant to give up its own imperial ambitions. However, the end of Turkish domination in the Balkans and the redistribution of spheres of influence there had become an acute international political problem.



A strong national liberation movement among the Balkan peoples preceded the war between Russia and Turkey. This had found a great response not only among various circles of the Russian population, but in Georgia as well. Georgian society greeted the Balkan national liberation movement and supported it in a moral and material way. Many Georgian volunteers went to the Balkans and joined the fighters for independence.

The Georgian people had even more sympathy for the riots in Ajara, which grew into a rebellion. Their aim was to get rid of the Turkish yoke.

The expectation that southeast Georgia would join its motherland was strengthened by a new war begun between Russia and Turkey in April 1877. Unlike other wars waged by Tsarism, whether with Iran or Turkey, it was the first war in which the Georgian people took part in of their own free will, realizing that the war would have positive results for the territorial integration of Georgia and for the restoration of its historical borders.

At this time, the Georgian nation already had a leading force. Ilia Chavchavadze and other *Tergdaleulni* took the leadership of the nation and directed its political and other movements in reasonable directions. These leaders and the whole people understood very well that Tsarism was their enemy and conqueror, to reconcile with Tsarism meant to reconcile with slavery, to give up the national independence and to deny its identity forever. That is why the struggle against the colonial regime continued, but now the subjective intentions of the Tsarism government coincided objectively with the age-long strivings of the Georgians. These were the circumstances that the Georgians of the 1860s explained to their fellow citizens and called them for courage and bravery.

The fact that Russia declared war on Turkey aroused great patriotic exhilaration in Georgia. People took to the streets, and the clergy held church services asking the Lord for victory. Grigol Orbeliani blessed the Georgian warriors going to the battlefield.

The formation of military units started in every corner of Georgia. In Kutaisi province there were twice as many soldiers going to war than the recruiting contingent. From Guria district alone came four thousand soldiers. About forty mounted and over sixty unmounted militia units were mobilized. Besides these, armed groups formed among the population for defensive purposes. Thus, 35,000 Georgian warriors were ready to fight.

The population helped the army in every possible way. Thousands of ordinary Georgians carried military equipment and provisions to the front with their carts or horses, supplied the soldiers with military equipment, provisions, forage and so on.

At the very beginning of the war, the Russian army occupied the town of Baiazet, Artahan, and others and moved in the direction of Kars.

In May 1877, the Turks landed 1,500 men near Gudauta and penetrated into the center of Abkhazia. Russian and Georgian reinforcements under the leadership of General Iakob Alkhazishvili rushed to liberate Abkhazia.

In Samurzakano, militia detachments formed and joined the regular army. With united forces, the enemy was defeated. Soon the Turks had to leave Sukhumi and then Abkhazia, but the Turks managed to take one part of the population of Abkhazia to Turkey as *Muhajirun*.

After the first defeat, Mukhtar Pasha collected his forces, counterattacked and regained all the territories that had been occupied by the Russian army at the beginning of the war.

The situation was complicated on the Black Sea littoral of the Caucasus as well, where Russian and Georgian united forces defeated the Turks in several battles. However, at Tsikhisdziri they suffered a defeat themselves and retreated.



By the autumn of 1877, Russia had managed to improve their situation. General Obruchev carried out crucial military operations in Asia Minor. Russian troops defeated the Anatolian army, occupied the stronghold of Kars and laid siege to the town of Arzrum.

The Russians forced a crossing over the Danube and fought battles in Bulgaria. With the help of local Serb and Rumanian warriors, they occupied Sofia, Plovdiv, Andrianopol and advanced on Constantinople.

The Turks ceased resisting and asked for a truce. The Tsarist government avoided a conflict with England, Austria and Hungary — which would have been imminent if the Russians had invaded Constantinople — by agreeing to peace negotiations. Russia and Turkey signed a peace treaty in San Stefano on March 3, 1878 that recognized the independence of Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania and strengthened the Tsarism influence in the Balkans. The boundaries of Turkey became narrower in Asia Minor as well. The southeastern part of Georgia became a Russian possession. The Tsarist government was to receive a great sum of money in reparation.

This war appeared to be the most successful one of those fought against Turkey. Together with Russian soldiers, both the peoples of the Balkans and the peoples of the south Caucasus made remarkable contributions to this victory. The foreign press wrote about the heroism of the Georgian people's army. Many Georgian generals or officers led their regular troops skilfully and were examples of amazing selflessness. Among them we must mention Generals Zakaria Chavchavadze, Dimitri Muskhelishvili, Ivane Amilakhvari and others.

However, the San Stefano Peace Treaty was not implemented. The Western powers, as if protecting Turkey, decided to revise the treaty. They achieved this aim at a representative congress in Berlin. The treaty, signed in Berlin on July 13, 1878, made serious amendments to the articles of the original peace treaty that were harmful to Russia.

The question of Batumi was the subject of a special dispute at the congress. The isolated Russian diplomats had to agree to some compromises. This prospective harbor town was given to Russia under the status of *porto franco*. According to the Berlin Treaty, Russia annexed a considerable part of southern and western Georgian lands formerly occupied by the Turks, namely: Ajara, Shavsheti, Klarjeti, Imerkhevi, Kola-Artaani, and Oltisi.

In spite of the decision of the congress, Turkey did not hurry to take its army from Ajara, trying to create strife and stir up opposition between the local people and Russian soldiers. The Sultan's agents frightened the population of Ajara that Russians "Would defile their religion, recruit soldiers from them", and so on. They advised them to move to Turkey, where he would give them some lands and a number of privileges.

On August 25, 1878, Russian troops occupied Batumi. The majority of the population reacted to this with some fear but some felt sympathy.

The administration of the Caucasus introduced Russian legislation in this part of the country as soon as they annexed Ajara and Kobuleti. Russian law was alien to the traditional standards of life of the Ajarians. Violence, which was characteristic of the Tsarist colonial regime, the brutal wilfulness of the Russian officials, the introduction of new taxes, and so on, caused discontent among the population. In some villages, there were anti-Russian rebellions, but the government did not change its course.



This harsh situation, the fear of the uncertain future, generous promises by the Turks, etc., made thousands of natives of Ajara consider leaving their own country. This idea was supported by the majority of begs who were oppressed either economically or politically. However, among them there were some, distinguished by their patriotic aspiration (Sherif Khimshiashvili, Gulo Kaikatsishvili, and others), who tried to persuade people not to leave their native land.

The migration of Moslems to Turkey — the *Muhajirun* — lasted for a few years. Thirty thousand people from Ajara and twenty-five thousand people from Abkhazia migrated to Turkey, the great majority settling down near the Sea of Marmara and northern Anatolia.

In spite of the *Muhajirun* tragedy, the war between Russia and Turkey had a special importance for Georgia. Georgian ancestral lands that had been held by the enemy for centuries were returned. The results of the war promoted the restoration of the territorial integrity of Georgia and the consolidation of the Georgian nation.

In one part of the newly integrated territory, the Tsarist government established the Batumi region, which was subordinated to Kutaisi province in 1886. Kola — Artaani and Oltisi, became part of the Kars region, which had also been given into Russian possession.

Georgian people welcomed the return of their brothers who were now free from the Turkish yoke. The progressive Georgian society welcomed a delegation of the free Ajara in Tbilisi enthusiastically and treated them cordially. The worthy people of Georgia did their best for these forcefully converted people to heal their age-long wounds and to develop their economic and cultural life.

Georgian Village, Town and Urban Life in the Nineteenth Century

During her long history, Georgia has always been an agrarian country. Intensive agriculture and traditional economy was still important for the nation in the nineteenth century. The majority of the population still lived in the countryside. After the establishment of Russian rule, some changes took place in the relationships between the classes and social layers of Georgia, though in the pre-reform period the social structure remained the same. The class division of the population was still in force even after the abolition of serfdom. The main social classes were the nobility and peasantry again, in spite of the fact that a great gap as far as property was concerned lay between them, together with the development of capitalism, it was among them that the social layers — the bourgeoisie and proletariat — were born.

The nobility had their dominant position as before. The Georgian aristocracy was not more than four or five per cent of the whole population, but economically and according to its legal rights it was dominant. The greatest part of the Georgian lands belonged to the nobility. The biggest landowners were the following *tavads*: the Palavandishvilis (in the Akhalkalaki District), the Orbelianis and Baratashvilis (in the Borchalo District), Machabeli (in the Dusheti District), Amirejibi (in the Gori District), etc. *Aznaurs*, who used to have fewer serfs and less lands and more moderate incomes, were more numerous.



Tsarism strove to join *tavads* and *aznaurs* into one class and to make it the social and political mainstay of the occupied land. For this purpose, a deputy council of noblemen was established in Tbilisi in 1803, in the Kutaisi Province in 1851 and so on. The Georgian aristocracy was still discontented. Once they even took up the arms, but their opposition to the colonial regime was over as soon as the 1832 conspiracy failed.

If before there were few representatives of *tavads* and *aznaurs* in the service of the Russian rule, from the Vorontsov period the desire to join the military forces became almost universal. Hundreds of Georgians became generals and officers of the Russian army. Under the banner of their occupier, they fought devotedly in the wars of Tsarism and brought glory to Russian arms.

Only a small part of nobility preserved their national dignity, a patriotic spirit and an irreconcilable attitude towards the occupant. The ideas of this part of the nobles are clearly shown in Alexandre Orbeliani's notes and namely in the phrase: "I don't like Russians in Georgia, I want them to get lost so that the smell of Georgia would not reach them, but in Russia, let them be happy". The wonderful generation of the *Tergdaleulni* came from the progressive circles of the nobility; this generation showed not only the best qualities of their class but also the best qualities of the entire Georgian nation.

Their origin, upbringing, life style, manners and dress distinguished the *tavads* and *aznaurs* from other layers of the population. These happy-go-lucky people tried to achieve their aims with their old morals and manners in the new circumstances, but the changes in their economic lives, monetary and commodity relations, required quite a different flair and ability. Georgian nobility was not prepared for these changes and were lagging helplessly behind the time. Only a few of them managed to transform their economy, introduce European techniques and improve the production based on labour rationalization. Among the latter were Dimitri Abkhazi, Alexandre Chavchavadze, Ivane Mukhranbatoni and others.

The majority of landowners, especially after the abolition of serfdom when they no longer had any serfs and peasants, chose another form of existence and started to sell lands. Together with the growth of demand on money, land in Georgia became an object of brisk and lively trade. Land was sold by representatives of all levels of society, but mainly by *tavads* and *aznaurs*. The buyers were essentially from a non-Georgian circle of moneylenders, merchants, manufacturers and so on. Peasants also managed (and it was not a rare occasion) to buy some lands.

Among the lower class of the rural population, peasants belonging to masters were in the majority. The peasant reform brought changes into their lives. Many of them now became landowners and by using hired labor were able to raise their fortunes. However, there were still a lot of peasants who had little or no land at all. If they stayed in the villages they had to cultivate other people's lands and give the landowner one fourth (sometimes even half) of their harvests.

The disorder in agrarian relations, the red tape of the liability law, the continuous increase of land leasing price, and the increase of state and other taxes made the situation increasingly worse for the peasants. Riots and protests by peasants who were thirsty for freedom and land would not stop. From 1873 to 1876, villages in Samegrelo burned in the fire of rebellion. In 1875 and 1876, the Russian government punished the riotous free Svaneti with unprecedented cruelty, a punitive expedition completely destroying the village



of Khalde. In 1878, a peasant rebellion in Kiziki was suppressed by using military force, and so on.

Whatever the hardships of contemporary existence were, life was still developing and advancing. Capitalist relations dragged into its orbit and transformed Georgian village life. New social changes made property inequality deeper in the peasantry. Together with the impoverishment of the great part of the peasant population, the number of middle and well-off peasants grew too. Unfortunately, this category of peasants was much smaller than that of those who, because of poverty, landlessness and the fear of hunger, had to work for well-to-do families as hired men, or farm laborers, or go away in search of living by selling their labor. In the years of bad harvest, going away in search of a living used to be very common.

Georgian peasants went to Tbilisi, Batumi, Chiatura, Odessa, Baku and other towns of the empire where they found jobs in factories working as stevedores, bakers, cooks and so on. There were also jobs in the timber business and in railway construction, which had just begun in Georgia.

Living in towns gave peasants more opportunities to earn money even as it increased their demands and developed their tastes. A person gone away in search of a living became more knowledgeable; his consciousness and cultural level increased. A peasant acquired town manners by and by, becoming different from his villagers not only by his views but by his appearance as well. It was from this circle that village revolutionary propagandists appeared, the number of which grew even more from the beginning of the twentieth century.

In the first third of the nineteenth century, agriculture could not develop because of continuous wars and rebellions. In this respect, positive changes can be noticed only from the 1840s.

Peace, even under the colonial regime, helped the economy revive. Manufacturers became more active, they became more interested in labor activities and so on.

From the traditional branches of the agricultural economy, grain cultivation increased and the harvests became bigger. The Southern Caucasus provided the tens of thousands of Russian soldiers garrisoned there with bread. Part of the wheat was sold abroad too. In the 1860s, about a million poods of maize and in the 1890s over six million poods of maize were exported from Georgia to Turkey, England, France, Spain, Scotland and Ireland. Millions of Georgian eggs and poultry, mainly chickens, were exported to European countries.

Viticulture and wine-making, centered in Kakheti, developed greatly. Wine-making was also widely spread in Western Georgia. Georgian wine was sold in local markets for the most part, though it was sold abroad too with great success.

Other branches of intensive agriculture were growing fast as well: fruit growing, manufacturing of silk from cocoons, tobacco, and cotton and so on.

Tea seeds first came to Georgia from China in 1845. This new agricultural product grew well in the subtropical zone of Western Georgia, and soon tea plantations appeared in Abkhazia, Guria, Samegrelo and Ajara.

Mountain population paid more attention to cattle breeding. The number of sheep and cattle increased and trade in cheese, milk, meat, wool, leather, and so on was conducted on a large scale. In general, barter became lively and widespread.



In the first half of the nineteenth century, the main commercial centers in Georgia were Tbilisi, Kutaisi, and Kulevi. Famous trade fairs were the Alaverdi fair in Kakheti, the Khoni, Chkhari, Sachkhere, Oni, and Senaki fairs in Western Georgia, and so on. From the standpoint of transporting commodities, port towns of Poti and Batumi became very important later.

Local merchants did not have much capital yet and they had little knowledge of western trade practices, but still they used to travel to Germany, Austria, and France to purchase merchandize. It should be mentioned that among Georgians, being a merchant was considered an undignified occupation for some reason or another and commercial business was in the hands of Armenians and Jews. However, the social-economic advances of the nineteenth century changed the situation in this respect too. Even indigent *aznaurs* did not shun engaging in trade and there were numerous merchants from the peasantry.

Trade brought considerable profits to Georgian merchants, with which they made capital investments in manufacturing. This process was an ordinary thing for bourgeois relations in western countries, but Georgia was not a free country. Her model of development was defined by the Tsar and not by Georgia herself. Moreover, the tsarist government's plan did not include fostering industrial development on the peripheries.

The revival of trade changed Georgian cities, promoting and facilitating the cultivation of urban life. These changes were visible in Tbilisi earlier than in other towns. In a very short time Tbilisi became the political center not only of Georgia but also of the whole Caucasus. From the eastern feudal town Tbilisi became a highly developed European-style city.

Kutaisi was declared the center of the province in 1846, facilitating its growth and development. District towns, such as Gori, Telavi, Signaghi, Akhaltsikhe, Dusheti and others were developing. Poti and Batumi. Khashuri, Zestaponi and Samtredia became important railway junctions.

At the beginning of the 1860s, the urban population increased threefold at the expense of the rural population, growing to over 140,000. The speed of urbanization became more evident in the following decades. The role and importance of towns grew in both economic and cultural life. The social structure of city dwellers changed too. From the second half of the nineteenth century the gap between the classes was bridged little by little. The determining factor now was property status and the character of activities of the city people. New classes of capitalistic society — the bourgeoisie and the working class — appeared. The merchants and the middle class, owners of businesses, so-called petty bourgeoisie, became more numerous and the number of people, employed in the sphere of service, increased and so on.

In the city, there were neighborhoods for aristocrats and neighborhoods for the common people. The upper class had orchards either in town or around it, giving them additional income.

The role of such a social element as a citizen became distinct in urban life. The poorer and more degraded the nobility grew, the more the importance of citizenship increased. A large percentage of the population of Tbilisi was Armenian. For centuries Armenians, when oppressed by their enemies in harsh times, found shelter in Georgia. While the Georgian people were busy fighting for their national liberty against Tsarism, Armenians were engaged in profitable trade. They bought lands, built houses, saved money, and so



on. Soon after the abolition of serfdom, they began to invest their wealth in manufacturing, and, in a very short time, they were in dominant positions in a number of industries.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Georgian industry consisted of little more than craftsmanship. Georgian handicrafts (damask steel swords, gold brocades, etc.) were well known and highly sought after. Now they were made not only to order for individuals but for the markets as well.

It was also important that the new times decreased the production of handicrafts and increased and strengthened first the manufacturing and then machine-tool industry. Industrial production lacked its own economic basis and relied mainly on foreign capital. This is one of the reasons for the fact that the level of bourgeois development in Georgia was not very high at the time. Furthermore, the national bourgeoisie, which were rather few (the Zubalashvili brothers, David Sarajishvili, Akaki Khoshtaria, and others), were lagging behind foreigners in numbers and wealth, especially the capitalists of the Armenian origin. Because of their weakness, unlike their European analogs, the Georgian bourgeoisie could not become the leading power of the nation. They could not take the place of the feudal aristocracy, which was falling into decay, nor could they shoulder the burden of their country's development.

The social situation of workers was also peculiar in Georgia. The number of workers markedly increased because of the development of the industrial production, but quantitatively the workers were only 1.4 percent, (about 28,000 to 30,000) of the entire population. The majority of Georgian workers were still closely connected with the land and village. This was reflective in a way of the psychology of workers and affected their consciousness. Owning even a tiny plot of land in the village filled a Georgian worker with a feeling of ownership and this distinguished him from a Russian proletarian, who had nothing at all.

Such workers were employed in almost all enterprises, but they were more highly concentrated in the construction of the railway main line. The first railway line from Poti to Kvirila opened in 1871. A year later, the railway connected the port of Poti with Tbilisi. Soon railway lines stretched toward Kutaisi, Tkibuli, Borjomi and so on. The completion of the Batumi-Samtredia and Baku-Tbilisi main lines were of great importance because the railway stretched from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea. Railway travel was greatly facilitated by a four-kilometer long Surami railroad tunnel that was bored in the Likhi mountain ridge in 1886-1890. The Tsarist government built it for quite different purposes, though. Unintentionally, it helped connect different parts of the country and facilitated their economic development with the appearance of a number of industrial branches and their further growth.

The industrial development of Georgia was partly shaped by the orders of the treasury and in a greater part by the demand of the local market. The first big enterprises processing raw material started to work in the 1820s and 1830s, such as a silk weaving factory founded by a French merchant Castel, the Zubalashvili and Company sugar factory in Tbilisi, and a cotton weaving mill in Telavi. Soon there appeared many others such as soap, glass, leather factories, metal and cast-iron foundries, furniture, felt, tobacco, brick, tile factories and sawmills.

Mining also revived, based mainly on copper deposits at Alaverdi, Akhtala and Shamblugi. In the 1840s, the foundation for the mineral industry was laid when the mining



of Tkibuli coal deposits began. Later, from 1879, on Akaki Tsereteli's initiative, the extraction of manganese started; in Navtlugi, Eldari and Shiraki valleys oil was extracted, and so on.

The newly born food industry developed quickly. Many bakeries appeared, and a macaroni factory opened in Tbilisi. German colonists produced the best quality Bavarian beer. Alcoholic drinks, Georgian cognac and liqueur, produced in the factories of David Sarajishvili, a chemist and businessman who had received his education in Europe, became quite famous. Sarajishvili's products were sold in his own shops in Tbilisi, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Warsaw, as well as in other shops. Some part of it was sold in England, Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Factories and plants appeared in almost every part of Georgia, namely, in Kutaisi, Telavi, Gori, Signaghi, Akhaltsikhe and so on. Batumi became one of the most important industrial centers, which facilitated the quick development of the oil industry in Baku. Oil from Azerbaijan was exported to international markets mainly through Batumi. Chiatura produced 54 percent of the manganese in the world.

The communication system improved. Telegraph connected Georgia with Russia, and in the 1860s and 1870s telephone lines were stretched between Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Poti, Telavi and other district towns. The network of post offices became wider. In 1883, the telephone system began to operate. Soon this novelty was available in Kutaisi, Batumi and many other towns. At the end of the century, Tbilisi occupied the fifth place in the empire, according to the number of telephone subscribers, after St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, and Kharkov.

First medical institutions started to appear in Georgia. In 1808, a military hospital opened in Tbilisi, in 1820 a city hospital was built, in 1868 the Mikhail Hospital began to operate, etc. From the 1860s, the urban economy began to improve gradually. More attention was paid to the organization of public services and amenities, and to the outward appearance of the city. Two and three-floor stone houses and new bridges were built, old, narrow streets became wider. Russian and European means of transport, such as, the *droshka*, carriage, van, were widely spread. In Tbilisi the *konka*, a horse-pulled railway, was used, and so on.

The number of cultural and educational institutions grew considerably as well. In this respect, Tbilisi was more distinguished. There, first the Italian opera house and then a Russian drama theatre were founded. Then, in the 1850s, the restored Georgian theatre began to work. Magazines, newspapers and books were printed, a library and a museum were founded, and entertainments were arranged. In 1872, the Emperor Alexander II Garden opened in Tbilisi, as well as others.

In Tbilisi literary salons, you would often hear the French language. Aristocratic families often hired French or German governesses or tutors. From the second half of the nineteenth century clubs for the nobility, officers clubs, and others replaced the salons of large and fashionable houses.



The Social-Political Situation in Georgia in the 1880s and 1890s

The liberal reforms carried out in Russia in the 1860s and 1870s made it possible for the bourgeoisie to develop in the country, but the metropolis itself did not appear to be ready for radical changes. A great part of Russia's society, among them the revolutionary circles (*Narodnaya Volya*, etc.), looked at the reformatory activities of Alexander II with suspicion. Groups of terrorists arranged several attacks on the "tsar liberator", and on March 1, 1881, members of the *Narodnaya Volya* killed the hateful tsar.

In his allegorical poem, Akaki Tsereteli considered the assassination of the tsar to be the appearance of a swallow, the harbinger of spring, and thought that the future—the overthrowing of Tsarism and national liberty—were near. However, the coming of the real "spring" was still rather far in the future.

The assassinated tsar's son, Alexander III, ascended the throne. He immediately stopped the reforms, which he declared to have been "a fatal mistake", and began to strengthen the autocracy. A military-political regime began to dominate the country, creating a political counter reaction.

The false sovereignty of Poland and Finland was limited even more. The political concepts — the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Georgia, and others — ceased their existence. Maniacal great-power chauvinism began to flourish, and colonial oppression became more severe. The Tsarism took the course toward the complete Russification of the empire.

The new emperor issued an order annulling the post of the viceroy of the Caucasus and to restore the post of commander-in-chief. The system governing the region was completely changed. The Caucasian provinces were directly subordinated to the imperial centre. The post of a general-governor was again established, districts and towns were divided into police sections governed by police officers. The loyalty of the population was controlled and censorship became stricter.

The police persecuted, imprisoned, sent to jail and sentenced to penal servitude people with progressive ideas. The administrative punishment of the people accused of political crimes became an ordinary thing.

Extreme repression marked the rules of the Commanders-in-Chief Dondukov-Korsakov, Sheremetyev and Golitsin. The ability of the local population to work in government and law enforcement organizations had been limited before and now these posts became quite inaccessible.

The colonization of Georgia acquired a broader character. Whereas the Georgian peasants did not have any land, the Caucasian administration gave thousands of people of various origins who had come from remote provinces of Russia the best lands on the Black Sea coast and settled them down permanently.

The attack on Georgian culture, generally on spiritual values, was much stronger. The Russianizers attacked all those bulwarks that gave stability to the national ideology. The Georgian school, church, theatre, press, and, most of all, the Georgian language — the foundation of the national consciousness — became a special target.



The main supporters of the discrimination were the trustee of the educational district K. Yanovski and the Exarch Pavel. Yanovski began by driving the Georgian language from the national school and substituting it with Russian. Not only was teaching in Georgian forbidden in schools, but speaking it as well.

Georgian teachers were dismissed from work and thrown out into the streets. The sphere of education was completely assimilated. The reactionary trustee published a circular about teaching in Megrelian in Samegrelo schools, Svan in Svaneti, and in Turkish in Ajara. This did great harm to the Georgian people's national unity. Yanovski justified his action by pedagogical reasons and by stating that the Megreles, Svans and Ajarians were not Georgians and that they represented different nations. They compiled the Megrelian written language based on Russian and even began translating religious books into Megrelian. The next step was to perform religious services in Samegrelo churches in the Megrelian language, but the local clergy and the entire progressive society, raised their voices and condemned this deceitful act of Tsarism.

To solidify the unity of the Georgians, Ilia Chavchavadze paid a special visit to historic Egrisi, traveling almost about the whole region, exposing the treacherous plan of the autocracy and uttering the well-known words, "I have come to Samegrelo and found Georgia here." This laconic phrase metaphorically expresses the idea of Georgia's unity and indivisibility.

Georgian intellectuals guessed the danger coming from the government in time and rallied to protect the country from it. S. Meskhi, D. Kipiani, J. Gogebashvili, I. Chavchavadze and others exposed Yanovski's plans by daring publications.

The tsarist government used thousands of ways to alienate the Georgian and Abkhazian peoples with the purpose of breaking their age-long unity. By strengthening colonization in Abkhazia, by carrying out the imperial church policy and by other measures the autocracy tried to take this region away from Georgia and turn it into a Russian province.

The attempts to separate Ajara, Samegrelo, Svaneti and Abkhazia from their mother country met with determined resistance from the Georgian people. The Georgian press made a firm stand defending national interests and kindled feelings of implacability, courage and hope for the future in the society. The Russian administration of the Caucasus, besides censorship, set in motion the police as well. In 1880 the newspaper *Obzor* (*Review*), published in Russian, was banned and its editor — Niko Nikoladze — was exiled from Georgia. In 1883, publication of the newspaper *Shroma* (*Labor*) and the magazine *Imedi* (*Hope*) was stopped. In 1885, the newspaper *Droebe* (*The Times*) was also closed because it was against the government.

The autocracy fought against the press and hindered its work, but they did not dare to close down such an important cultural-educational institution as the theater was. The Georgian Dramatic Society sponsored the theater, helping it become a powerful voice for propagating nationalistic ideas.

At the beginning of 1882 a Russian reporter of the *Moskovskie Vedomosti* (Moscow Records) abused the Georgian flag brought out on to the stage while the play *Samshoblo* (Motherland) was being performed, and the editor himself called this flag "a rag." Georgian society expressed great indignation at this insult to their national symbol. Ilia Chavchavadze and Akaki Tsereteli answered the newspaper's indecent act adequately.



The Georgian church was not saved from constant attacks either. Exarch Pavel forbade teaching Georgian literature in the Tbilisi Theological Seminary and dismissed the Georgian teachers. Churches and monasteries were robbed stealthily; ancient manuscripts, precious icons, crosses and other things were carried away. The church lost its previous attractiveness and authority in the hands of Russian exarchs and a number of believers turned their backs on religion.

The anti-Georgian activities of the government and synod were vigorously opposed by the Imereti, Guria and Samegrelo bishops, Gabriel and Alexandre, and other patriotic public figures.

In the spring of 1886, Ioseb Lagiashvili, a former student of Tbilisi theological seminary killed the rector of this educational institution, Archpriest Chudetski, for unjust treatment. Exarch Pavel publicly cursed Georgia and the Georgian nation while speaking in the Sioni cathedral on the day of the rector's funeral. The Georgian people felt extreme indignation at this fact. It was 72-year-old Dimitri Kipiani who took it upon himself to defend the abused dignity of his nation. He sent a letter of protest to the unworthy exarch and demanded that he leave Georgia.

Dimitri Kipiani was exiled to Stavropol, where hired killers murdered him in 1837. The selfless patriot's body was brought to Tbilisi with great honor and interred in the Mtatsminda Pantheon. The Georgian people turned Dimitri Kipiani's funeral into a powerful demonstration against the Russian autocracy.

The reactionary policy of the government did not slow down the national liberation movement. On the contrary, the intensification of colonial oppression caused a new upheaval.

The *Tergdaleulni* headed this movement in the 1880s. By that time, new and notable members such as Alexandre Kazbegi, Vazha-Pshavela, Ivane Machabeli had joined their ranks. These patriot public figures tried to establish and expand educational, cultural, economic and other institutions. In this respect the activities of the Society for Spreading Literacy Among Georgians, the Bank of the Nobility and Manorial Estates, the Drama Society, the Georgian Book Publishing Society, and so on are notable.

The *Narodnik* Movement was distinguished in the Georgian social political sphere of the 1880s. The mother country of this ideology was Russia. The *narodniks* declared that Russia had its own way and it moved towards socialism by evading capitalism. The social progress could be achieved by a revolution headed by the intelligentsia.

A great majority of the Georgian populists (Ivane Jabadari, Mikheil Chikoidze, Giorgi Zdanovich-Maiashvili, Alexandre Tsitsishvili and others) worked in Russia and were involved in revolutionary activities.

The ideas of the *narodniks* found followers in Georgia too. It was caused by Russia's influence. Secret *narodnik* circles were established in Tbilisi, Gori, Kutaisi, Telavi and Ozurgeti in the 1870s. Over 200 people were members of those circles. The leaders of this movement and its active participants were: Egnate Ioseliani, Isidore Kikodze, Mikheil Kipiani, Stephane Chrelashvili and others. Quite a few Georgian writers and publicists were in the ranks of the *narodniks*: Anton Purtseladze, Niko Lomouri, Soprom Mgaloblishvili, Niko Khizanishvili (Urbneli), Estate Mchedlidze (Bosleveli), Zacharia Chichinadze and others.



The populists assured the peasantry that their situation could only change through a revolution and tried to rally them with this purpose. Except for a few exceptions, Georgian peasants did not show any enthusiasm for armed opposition to the government and they rejected the *narodnik* approach of fighting for land and freedom.

The police discovered and destroyed the main populist organizations. Their work slowed down for a certain period, but revived again from the beginning of the 1880s and even changed its form. Some of the Georgian populists continued their revolutionary activities, but their majority moved to the cultural-educational arena with the purpose of improving the peasants' conditions. They published a newspaper and a magazine. However, when the administration closed down the above-mentioned publications, the populists joined various societies. A great number of them joined the *Tergdaleulni*, which continued to be an influential political force.

Ilia Chavchavadze was the recognized leader of nationalist forces. He was a steady follower of the road to freedom chosen by Georgia in the 1860s. Ilia Chavchavadze and his associates did not set the nation a task that was impossible to complete. This wise public man raised the question of political autonomy in the 1880s as the first stage of the sovereignty of the state; it was to be followed by the restoration of independence in different, better conditions.

The Russian administration of the Caucasus felt great animosity towards Ilia Chavchavadze and started clandestine police surveillance on him in 1884. It is also noteworthy that Tsarism did not allow the Georgian people to celebrate the 60th anniversary of his birth.

The Georgian progressive public men used events having great social importance or important historical dates to demonstrate the national unity. In this respect the funeral of Erekle Bagrationi, the son of Prince Alexandre, is notable. He was buried in Mtskheta with royal honors in 1882; carrying the remains of the poet Nikoloz Baratashvili from Ganja in 1893 and interring him in Tbilisi, the jubilee of the poet Raphiel Eristavi in 1895; the marking of the 100th anniversary of the Krtsanisi battle, and others are also noteworthy. All this made it obvious that the national liberation movement was growing and that the Georgian people's civic consciousness had significantly risen.

The society's animated interest was caused by the discussion held in the 90-s between Ilia Chavchavadze and Ivane Machabeli about the role of the Nobility and Manorial Estate Bank, also the debate about the interrelations of the social and national questions, defining the leading force of the national progress, on the one hand between Ilia Chavchavadze and Niko Nikoladze, and on the other between Ilia Chavchavadze and Giorgi Tsereteli, etc.

An important innovation of the beginning of the 1890s was that students were taking a greater interest in social-political activities and were joining revolutionary movements. Georgian students, studying in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa, Warsaw universities formed secret circles. They convened illegal congresses in Kutaisi in 1892, in Tbilisi in 1893 with the purpose of uniting these circles. An organization, called "Georgia's Liberty League," was founded. The members of the League were Andria and Giorgi Dekanozishvilis, Mikhail Kheltuplishvili, Vakhtang Gambashidze, Tedo Sakhokia, Giorgi Gvazava, Kita Abashidze, Noah Zhordania, Philippe Makharadze and others.



The aim of the "League," was the liberation of Georgia. The students' plan for regaining the country's independence was to unite with other nations oppressed by the empire and combine efforts. The young people were to start fighting when some "internal or foreign reason" weakened Russia. The league did not have time to begin practical work. The police found them out almost at once and nipped the work of the organization in the bud.

Georgia's national liberation movement grew again in the 1890s. The 1860s generation was joined by talented representatives of the belles-lettres: David Kldiashvili, Anastasia Eristav-Khoshtaria, the writers, former *narodniks*, such as Soprom Mgaloblishvili, Ekaterine Gabashvili, Shio Aragvispireli and others. A group of young representatives of the Georgian culture, brought up on the traditions of the *Tergdaleulni* and the newspaper *Iveria*, gathered around them. They were Giorgi Laskhishvili, Vasil Tsereteli, Ilia Nakashidze, Iakob Tsintsadze, Giorgi Zhuruli and others. They were also known as "Young Iverians." The group intended to make the program of the *Tergdaleulni* more concrete and to introduce novelty into the newspaper in this way, but it turned out to be impossible. The administration closed the *Iveria* in May 1896 and stopped its publication for eight months.

The magazine *Moambe* (Herald), published from 1894 and edited by Alexandre Chkonია, gave the point of view of Georgian society. The works of Maiashvili (Zdanevich) and Iakob Pantskhava were distinguished among the works of public men and people rallied around this new publication. These authors showed the necessity of the country's capitalist development and strengthening of the national bourgeoisie.

A remarkable event in the Georgian ideological life in the last decade of the century was the publication of the newspaper *Kvali* (*Track*). Anastasia Tumanishvili officially edited this organ of liberal tendencies, but in truth, Giorgi Tsereteli edited it. The leaders of the *Kvali* exposed many of the country's problems and offered the reader ways and means, based on scientifically thought out ideas, to solve them.

In 1898, Giorgi Tsereteli gave the *Kvali* to the members of the "Third Estate." This group of Marxists downplayed the importance of the national question and tried to establish the ideology of the cosmopolite social democracy in Georgia. They stirred up a controversy with the *Iveria* and opposed it ideologically.

The social-democrat propagandists called upon the workers, lacking literacy and political culture, to support them and promised them earthly paradise if they succeeded. The leaders of this new movement exerted considerable influence on workers with this social demagoguery, assisted by many circumstances.

Acute political slogans substituted for the economic demands of the workers. The workers' spontaneous riots acquired the character of organized strikes, mass demonstrations, and a stiff opposition to the government. The end of the nineteenth century was marked by fierce opposition between the Georgian social democrats and the national forces, united in the camp of the *Iveria*. "The changes in life" were reflected in the Georgian national-liberation movement as well, distinct signs of the ideological separation and redistribution of forces that appeared inside it.



The Beginning of the Workers' Movement

The Third Estate (*Mesame Dasi*)

While the peasants' reform was being carried out and capitalism was developing in Georgia, a new social group — the workers' class — was born. Its size in the social structure of the population was insignificant for quite a long time, though it showed a tendency to grow.

Due to the low development of the industry, technical backwardness, difficult working and living conditions, nonexistence of the labor laws and other reasons, workers' social-economic conditions were unbearable. These circumstances caused protest movements to form among the workers that gradually developed a mass character. The first protest actions were characterized by economic demands, followed by strikes, demonstrations and other forms of opposition to the administration.

Various trends of a socialistic character appeared in Western Europe and Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century. Their aim was to protect the interests of workers. Among these trends, Marxism held a special place. Soon this revolutionary ideology became the ideology of the working class struggle and spread quickly.

Therefore, the development of the working class movement in Georgia created favorable conditions for the spread of social-democratic ideas. Marxist teachings came to Georgia at the beginning of the 1890s. This new ideology found its way to Georgia via Russia and Europe. The social democrats — T. Afanasiev, I. Loozin, G. Francheski, O. Kogan, and others — who had moved to the Caucasus, brought these ideas from Russia. Socialist views entered Georgia through the Georgian young people who lived in Europe as well. The Russian and Western European social democratic teachings differed and the followers of the former opposed those of the latter.

The first group of a Marxist or a social democratic leaning formed in Georgia was established by young people gathered around the Georgian writer Egnate Ninoshvili: Silibistro Jibladze, Isidore Ramishvili, Noah Zhordania, Karlo Chkheidze, Vladimir Darchiashvili, Mikha Tskhakaia, Philipe Makharadze and others. They held gatherings in Zestaphoni in 1892 and in Tbilisi in 1893. As a result of those meetings they founded a social-democratic organization which Giorgi Tsereteli called the *Mesame Dasi* (The Third Estate). The establishment of this organization was announced officially on May 8, 1894, the day when Egnate Ninoshvili was buried. In their farewell speeches, Jibladze and Darchiashvili declared him to have been head of the group and presented a general picture of their aims.

Noah Zhordania worked out and published the theses of the *Mesame Dasi* in his work "Economic Progress and Nationality."

Zhordania extended his ideas in his following publications. In his opinion, the old patriarchal relations in Georgia were replaced by capitalist reality; he thought that national development meant economic progress, followed by political changes; the nation is divided into groups and the class struggle between them becomes bitterer. If in the more advanced Europe, the initiator of the changes was bourgeoisie, in backward countries this role was to be taken by the "working people" and not the intellectuals. National progress is guided by the class struggle ("The main vein of the progress is buried here"), etc.



It must be noted that Niko Nikoladze had become acquainted with the social-democratic ideology and Karl Marx before the members of the *Mesame Dasi*. Marx asked him for cooperation and to be a representative of the 1st International – a workers' international organization, in the Caucasus. Nikoladze considered spreading Marxist teaching in Georgia harmful from the national point of view and rejected the offer.

The Georgian Marxists used the newspaper *Kvali* for propagating their ideas. Giorgi Tsereteli gave the sheets of the newspaper to them.

Noah Zhordania spent the years 1893-1897 in Europe. Having learned the way the people lived there, he understood "that the social structure of Europe was very far from that of Georgia." When this Marxist returned to Georgia, he found out that Russian social democratic ideology was mainly spread among his former friends and workers' circles as well. This ideology aspired to establish a dictatorship by a revolution; as for the national question, it avoided and rejected it as the factor slowing down the class struggle.

When appearing in the public arena, the members of the *Mesame Dasi* declared that they expressed the interests of the whole nation, and not of some separate class. This statement is far from being true.

The members of the *Mesame Dasi* opposed the national ideology of the *Tergdaleulni* (Georgian public figures who had received their education in Russia). They condemned reconciliation and cooperation between the classes as well as the idea of uniting the nation and declared the class struggle to be the means of all kinds of progress.

The social democrats (N. Zhordania, Ph. Makharadze, and others) declared a struggle against Ilia Chavchavadze, whom they presented as a feudal thinker and the working people's enemy. They brought some unjust accusations against him.

Members of the *Mesame Dasi* fought openly against national unity, kindled social enmity and the opposition among classes, called everybody to destroy ideologically all those public or political trends which opposed spreading social democratic points of view.

Mesame Dasi played an important part in making the working class aware of its role, in uniting the workers and educating them politically. However, the establishment of Marxist ideology in our country and the activities of the social democrats did great harm to the national liberation movement, impeding the process of the nation's consolidation and hampering the struggle for the restoration of independence.

The Georgian Culture in the Nineteenth Century

Both material and spiritual culture of the Georgian nation underwent considerable changes in the nineteenth century. In spite of the great danger to which the Tsarist colonial domination exposed our country, the greatest and the best part of Georgians preserved firm national consciousness, unstained orthodox Christian faith and a traditional cultural appearance. Courtesy, delicacy, respect for their elders, hospitality, support of their fellow men, tolerance, and so on still remained the characteristic features of Georgians. Even an illiterate peasant had high morals, honesty and tact and demonstrated all of this in his behavior and his mode of life.

From the point of view of economy Georgia remained an agricultural country; however, gradually industrial enterprises also appeared.

The territorial and national unification of the country, the social and economic progress slowly changed the Georgian people's mode of life. Their outward appearance also underwent transformation. The new realities influenced the way the people dressed. Alongside Georgian national attire, one could see European suits. Cookery and the assortment of foodstuffs available diversified. The Georgian festive table was a remarkable phenomenon. A good toastmaster and well-made wine was its beauty. Russians who had come to live in Georgia preferred vodka. Producing wine and vodka in families was a great cultural tradition and a source of family income as well.

Education

Georgia's Russian administration did not think much of the cultural development of the newly conquered country. Moreover, it began its activities in the sphere of education by closing down all the Georgian schools, including about twenty in Tbilisi.

The educational policy of Tsarism in Georgia was based on colonial objectives. Alongside preparing necessary officials for the administration, one of the functions of the school was the Russification of the people. The first Russian elementary school in Tbilisi opened in 1802, but it closed very soon because the pupils were unable to master the Russian language.

In 1804, a Tbilisi four-class school for the nobility was founded. It was first turned into a six-class school, and then into a gymnasium in 1870.

School was inaccessible for the wide layers of society; however, the number of literate people was not small. The people from the lower strata learned the Georgian language from educated priests or village teachers. Churches and monasteries remained national educational centers.

From the 1830s, elementary schools begin to appear in Georgia's small towns and villages, supported at the expense of the local inhabitants. Two-class district schools were founded in Tbilisi, Gori, Telavi, Signaghi, Dusheti, Akhaltsikhe, Kutaisi, etc. In all of them, teaching was in Georgian. In 1830, a boarding school for the girls of the nobility opened in Tbilisi, later on becoming an institute for noble girls. In 1864, St. Nino School was founded.

After the autocephaly of the Georgian Church had been abolished, a theological seminary was opened in Tbilisi in 1817 to prepare Russian-speaking personnel for the church. In the following years district theological seminaries were founded in Telavi, Gori, Signaghi and Kutaisi.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the network of schools in Georgia spread considerably, but it did not meet the increased demand for education.

After private persons, the city self-government institutions and village-societies had been allowed to open elementary schools. The number of these so-called people's schools increased.

The Society for Spreading Literacy Among Georgians played a remarkable role in developing national education. Some more elementary schools were opened in Batumi, Tianeti, Kavkav, etc. under its aegis.



The spread of reading-rooms, public lectures, and Sunday schools assisted the development of the rate of education. In 1846, Tbilisi Public Library was founded. In 1873 the first library opened in Kutaisi.

Printing books increased through the efforts of Georgian public men. Great attention was paid to publishing textbooks. I. Gogebashvili's *Deda Ena (Mother Tongue)*, *Russkoe Slovo (Russian Language)* were generally recognized as the best. Georgian pedagogical thinking reached new heights. Its prominent representatives were Iakob Gogebashvili, Ilia Tsinamdzgvrishvili, Luarsab Botsvadze, Ivane Rostomashvili, Niko Tskhvedadze and others. They worked out and implemented a progressive theory of bringing up children.

The autocracy and its bureaucracy hindered the formation of the national education. Beginning in the 1880s, both did their best to drive the Georgian language out of educational institutions, including elementary schools. In spite of all this, the Georgian people, having great cultural traditions, aspired to get an education. According to the number of literate population, Georgia occupied one of the first places in the Russian Empire.

Tsarism set up barriers to opening a higher educational institution in Georgia.

Science

Our compatriots carried out scientific and research work outside their native country, in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The greater part of their attention was paid to the humanities, though Georgians distinguished themselves in natural sciences and technical subjects as well. For instance, Prince Ioane wrote a textbook in physics besides *The History of Georgia* and *A New History*. Apart from historical works, Bagrat Bagrationi was also the author of the works of medical and economic character. Petre Bagrationi had discovered one of the kinds of the radioactive minerals, which was called "Bagrationite" in his honor. He also invented the first dry galvanic battery, worked out an original method of mining and processing gold, etc.

All efforts of the Georgian scholars and scientists were directed towards representing Georgia's heroic past and popularization of its original culture and history. In the first half of the nineteenth century, a great number of such works were created and published.

A Rustvelological research and work, *The History of Iveria*, written by Teimuraz Bagrationi, an honorary member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, must be specially mentioned; also five volumes of *The History of Georgia* by Sulkhan Baratashvili, published in St. Petersburg and other publications in which the past of our country was discussed against the background of the world history.

The historian Mikheil Baratashvili started the Georgian scientific numismatics. In 1844, he published in St. Petersburg in Russian and French a fundamental work *The Numismatic Acts of the Georgian Kingdom*. The work received wide recognition and he was elected member of the Parisian Academy of Sciences.

The French orientalist, Academician Marie Brosset, did much good in the matter of forming Kartvelology as a new trend of science, also in acquainting the Western reader with Georgian culture. He translated into French and published in St. Petersburg seven volumes of *Kartlis Tskhovreba (The History of Kartli)*; he also published the historical works of Sekhnia Chkheidze, Papuna Orbeliani, Oman Kherkheulidze with scientific



commentary, he published Shota Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* again together with the Georgian scholars D. Chubinashvili and Z. Palavandishvili. Brosset is also the author of *The History of Georgia* and other important researches.

Platon Ioseliani and Dimitri Bakradze played a significant part in the Georgian historiography. Bakradze's *The History of Georgia* is very important. The narration in it begins with ancient times and reaches the end of the 10th century. On his initiative an important centre of the Georgian culture was established — a Museum of the Church, a Society of the History and Archaeology of the Caucasus, etc. Bakradze is considered to have been the founder of the Georgian paleography, the initiator of other additional disciplines of history (archaeology, ethnography). He was elected corresponding member of Russia's Academy of Sciences.

The well-known public figures: Mose Janashvili, Tedo Zhordania, Niko Khizanishvili (Urbneli), Alexandre Kipshidze (Proneli), Zacharia Chichinadze and others served the scholarly studies of Georgia's past.

S. Dodashvili's *Logic*, published in 1827, was used in the empire's secondary schools as a textbook for a long time.

Gerasime Kikodze (Bishop Gabriel) published a fundamental work *The Principles of Experimental Psychology* in the Russian language in 1858. This book was also used as a manual in all the seminaries of Russia.

The department of the Georgian language and literature, opened in St. Petersburg University, became an important research center of the Georgian language and literature. It was first headed by David Chubinashvili, and later by Alexandre Tsagareli. Professor Chubinashvili compiled a Georgian-Russian-French, a Georgian-Russian and Russian-Georgian dictionaries. He also published *The Reader of Georgian Literature* and *Georgian Grammar* in Russian. In 1860, the immortal *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was edited and published once more by D. Chubinashvili.

Professor Alexandre Tsagareli conducted thorough research. He had first graduated from St. Petersburg University, and then continued studies in Austria and Germany. His fundamental works in many branches of Kartvelology have not lost their significance even today.

Alexandre Khakhanashvili headed scientific activities in Kartvelology in Moscow. The first systematic course of the history of the Georgian literature *The History of the Georgian Literature* belongs to him. It was published in four volumes. He had some other noteworthy works as well.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Georgian scientists achieved significant success in natural sciences as well. Professor Ivane Tarkhnishvili was the head of the Physiology Department in St. Petersburg Military Medical Academy. His works played a significant part in the development of scientific physiology.

Petre Melikishvili and Vasil Petriashvili, well-known chemists in the country, worked at Odessa University. Melikishvili became the first rector of Tbilisi University afterwards.

In spite of many obstacles, Georgian science followed the flow of times and tried not to fall behind the general progress.



Press

The first newspaper in Georgia and the whole of the Caucasus was published on March 8, 1819. Its name was *Sakartvelos Gazeti* (*The Newspaper of Georgia*). It was an official organ, but its publication stopped in 1822 due to lack of finances.

In the years 1828-1832 a newspaper in the Georgian language *Tbilisi Utskebani* (Tbilisi Records) was published.

In January 1832 the first Georgian magazine appeared - *Saliteraturi Natsilni Tbilisi Utskebatani*, (*The Literary Parts of Tbilisi Records*). The administration closed the magazine after five issues had been published.

From 1838 to 1841, Platon Ioseliani published *Sakartvelos Kalendari*, (*Georgia's Calendar*) every year. Valerian Gunia continued the work begun by him in 1888. This widely available publication served the wide masses of the population thirsting for knowledge and education for a long time.

In 1846, the government's official organ *Kavkaz* (*The Caucasus*) was founded. It was published in the Russian language. Georgian public figures also worked in this weekly Russian newspaper.

In January of 1852, a monthly magazine *Tsiskari* (*Dawn*) was issued with the assistance of Vorontsov, the viceroy of the Caucasus. The editor of the magazine was Giorgi Eristavi.

A small number of subscribers and lack of finances conditioned closing the magazine. The renewed magazine was published in 1858-1875. Its editor was Ivane Kereselidze. The publication of *Sakartvelo's Moambe* (*Georgia's Herald*) in 1863 was quite a new phenomenon in the Georgian journalism. It was edited by Ilia Chavchavadze. This first published organ of the *Tergdaleulni* existed only about a year, but it noticeably influenced the formation of the Georgian democratic press and the development of the national literature and thinking.

In this respect, the newspaper *Droebe* (*The Times*) was of no less importance. It was founded in 1866 and was regularly published until 1885. At the beginning it was headed by Giorgi Tsereteli, then Sergi Meskhi for a longer period of time, and in the last years of its existence it was edited by Ivane Machabeli. It was a Georgian newspaper "of a European character." All of the progressive intelligentsia gathered around it.

In 1871, a literary magazine *Krebuli* (*Collection*) was founded under the aegis of Niko Nikoladze. Both *Droebe* and *Krebuli* met the demands of the times in their contents. These organs of national and democratic thought found themselves not only in the vanguard of cultural life, but they become a certain center, directing the national liberation movement.

Ilia Chavchavadze's *Iveria* played a crucial role in the intellectual development of the Georgian people and the development of the national culture, in general. Founded in 1879, it became a newspaper in 1886. *Iveria* greatly assisted the progress of the national literature, the popularization of the Georgian folklore, refining the reader's taste, etc.

In the 1890s, the newspapers *Kvali* (*Track*) and *Tsnobis Purtseli* (*A Sheet of News*) and the magazine *Moambe* were added. These publications presented a clear picture of the growing Georgian bourgeois and democratic thought, the social-democratic and federalistic views.

Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century periodicals begin to appear, for example the agricultural journals *Gutnis Deda* (*A Ploughman*), *Sasoplo Gazeti*, (*The*



Village Newspaper.) and *Meurne*, (*Economic Worker*). There were also magazines intended for the younger generation such as *Nobati* (*Gift*), *Jejili* (*Corn Shoots*), etc.

At the same time, the publication of books increased. They had more and more readers. In 1847, the first specialized bookshop opened in Tbilisi. The same kind of a shop existed in Western Georgia, in Kutaisi, from 1880 onward.

Literature

The political bad fortune of Georgia had an impact on Georgian belles-lettres. Spiritual suffering, caused by the loss of national freedom and statehood, resulted in the glorification and idealization of the past against the background of the difficult and murky present.

In the first third of the nineteenth century, romanticism became the main trend of the national literature. Romanticism is considered the turning point of the Georgian artistic thinking towards the Western culture and the beginning of its "Europism."

The main representatives of the Georgian romanticism are Alexandre Chavchavadze, Grigol Orbeliani, Nikoloz Baratashvili, Vakhtang Orbeliani and others.

The main theme of Alexandre Chavchavadze's creative work is patriotism. He introduced "patriotic and civic pain" into the new Georgian literature. One can feel national sorrow, purely personal pains and the sorrow caused by social inequality in his lyrics alongside the grief born by the discontent provoked by every day life.

Grigol Orbeliani raised Georgian romanticism to a higher level. The main motif of his creative work is the acute national problem, aggravated by the bad situation in Georgia. The significant part of the poet's heritage contains the eulogy to Georgia's heroic past. Grigol Orbeliani's lyrical poetry is an endless hymn to the fight for freedom, and love for his native country. His poem "Toast," is the foundation on which Georgian nationalism, born in the nineteenth century, settled down.

Nikoloz Baratashvili created the whole epoch of the development of the national literature and social thinking. His poetry is called the crown of the Georgian romanticism, and some of his poems are thought to be masterpieces of our fiction. For instance, the immortal "*Merani*" ("Pegasus"). Its main idea is the struggle for freedom, against destiny, improving the life of his fellow men, sacrifice of one's life for a better future.

In the 1840s and 1850s, drama and prose developed alongside the poetry. The realistic description of life defines the course of literature. Giorgi Eristavi is considered one of the founders of critical realism in Georgian literature. He is also the founder of the national comedy. His name is also connected with the foundation of a new professional national theater and literary magazine.

The playwrights Zurab Antonov and Avksenti Tsagareli continued Eristavi's literary traditions.

Writer and publicist Lavrenti Ardaziani founded a new genre in Georgian literature: the social novel. In his works, he shows the destruction of old feudal ways of life and the inevitability of bourgeois relations in Georgia.



Poet and playwright Raphiel Eristavi was the founder of children's literature in Georgia. He developed the vaudeville genre, published several specialized dictionaries, collected and published specimens of the Georgian folklore, etc.

Daniel Chonkadze is the first Georgian writer who exposed the abnormality of serf-ownership, condemned social injustice and appealed to the oppressed peasantry to fight against it.

Ilia Chavchavadze is a name of which every Georgian is proud. He is a remarkable public figure in the nineteenth century Georgia. His work guided the development of Georgian belles-lettres, social thinking, and the national liberation movement in the nineteenth century. Through his artistic or public ideas, Ilia Chavchavadze not only enriched the treasury of the national culture, but also set the path for the Georgian people of escaping the colonial and social oppression. He trained them spiritually and encouraged them. Ilia Chavchavadze's literary heritage is our national treasure and the inexhaustible source of our spirituality.

Akaki Tsereteli was a great poet and thinker, called "the Elbrus of the Georgian poetry." The popularity and love that he enjoyed in his life is very rare. His native country and its love was the basis of his creative work. His patriotic lyrics, full of optimism, reached a peak of success. At the same time, Akaki sang of liberty, equality, goodwill, friendship, and the ideals of humanity. His poetry is distinguished by melodiousness and great simplicity. It is democratic by its character. Akaki Tsereteli, like Ilia Chavchavadze, is the pride of the national culture.

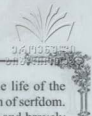
The compiler of *Deda-Ena* (*Mother-Tongue*, an elementary textbook in the Georgian language), the famous teacher, publicist and public figure — Iakob Gogebashvili — was a brilliant writer of children's books as well. His unforgettable stories developed national consciousness, love for their mother country and the feeling of loyalty in the younger generation.

Prose-writer and public figure Giorgi Tsereteli made an outstanding contribution to the literature of his native country. In his literary works, he describes the invasion of bourgeoisie into the depths of feudalism and its settling there. He also depicts the social changes in Georgian reality caused by this phenomenon, and notes the advantages of this new mode of life.

The great lover of nature, the poet Vazha Pshavela, animated the inanimate world and made it speak a human language. In his poems and stories a young deer and a mountain stream, a delicate violet and a flooded river talk to us. The main motifs in Vazha Pshavela's works are honesty, bravery, patriotism, the problems of Georgia's liberty, the social function of man, and other problems of humanity.

Alexandre Kazbegi was another writer who enriched Georgian belles-lettres. He depicts the fight of the mountain people against Russia's autocracy in his works. Kazbegi's heroes, fighting to defend their freedom and honor, are distinguished by their nobility and sincerity. They are selfless knights ready to give their lives to their mother country. These heroes expressed the aspiration of the entire Georgian nation.

In their prose Anton Purtseladze, Niko Lomouri, Ekaterine Gabashvili, Soprom Mgaloblishvili and others describe the miserable life of peasantry and express their *narodnik* ideas.



The works of Georgian democratic writer Egnate Ninoshvili depict the life of the working population of Guria. His works describe the period after the abolition of serfdom. He shows the social contradictions caused by the hardness of exploitation and bravely takes the side of the helpless, oppressed population. The writer exposes the violence of the Tsarism officials, unmasks the meanness of time-servers, etc. Ninoshvili is the author of the historical novel *Revolt in Guria*, which dramatically describes the 1841 revolt.

A new talented generation of writers appeared in the literary arena: David Kldiashvili, Dutu Megreli, Shio Mgvimeli and others. Their literary work developed in the following years.

Theater

The hard times of the first third of the nineteenth century killed the stage life in Georgia as well. The renaissance of the Georgian theater art begins at the end of the 1840s. The writer Giorgi Eristavi was its initiator and leader. With the assistance of viceroy M. Vorontsov, he established a permanent company of actors and began the renewal of the national theater.

The new Georgian theater started its work on January 2 (14), 1850. On that day Eristavi's comedy "Separation," was staged at Tbilisi's Gymnasium. The theater soon gained popularity. The Russian government of the Caucasus understood it had the power to kindle patriotic feelings in the population and stopped subsidizing it. The theater was unable to exist without finances and the company disbanded in 1856.

The repeated renewal of the Georgian professional theater is connected with the names of Ilia Chavchavadze and Akaki Tsereteli. In 1879, a permanent theater was restored in Tbilisi on their initiative. A dramatic society was set up with the purpose of managing its activities. Original, translated or altered plays were staged with success. The Georgian theater bought a building with the help of the Nobility's Bank. Ivane Machabeli's translations of Shakespeare's tragedies found their place in the repertoire of the theater from the very beginning. These performances greatly assisted the raising of the stage culture and the actors' professional level.

In 1880, a drama theater was founded in Kutaisi. Amateur drama circles sprang up in Gori, Telavi and Ozurgeti. In 1894, the Baku Georgian Theater was established with the help of the workers who were fond of theater.

There were many prominent representatives of the theatrical art on the Georgian stage, among them Vaso Abashidze. Lado Meskhishvili, Kote Meskhi, Kote Kipiani, Valerian Gunia and others. Theater was a burning hearth of culture, a great national rostrum of struggling for liberty even under severe repressions.

Fine Arts

Such branches of fine arts as painting, drawing and sculpture grew from the rich Georgian traditions of making articles of gold, ornaments and frescos. Portrait painting became most widely spread among them in the nineteenth century Georgia. A



prominent representative of this genre was Grigol Maisuradze, the first Georgian professional painter. He graduated from St. Petersburg Art Academy in 1884. Unfortunately, very few of his paintings still exist.

Impressive portraits were created by Romanoz Gvelesiani such as "A Kakhetian Man with a Pitcher" and "An Old Peasant". Alexandre Beridze's great paintings included "A Shepherd", and "A Boy Playing the *Salamuri*" (a kind of pipe). Alexandre Mrevlishvili was famous for his works "A Low Fence," and "In Front of the Village Office" and David Guramishvili for his "A Portrait of an Old Man" and "A Portrait of a Young Girl."

The most prominent representative of Georgian painting was Gigo Gabashvili. He received his education in painting in Russia and Germany. His first personal exhibition was arranged in Tbilisi in 1891. The best pictures in his rich heritage (he painted more than two thousand pictures) are "Three Citizens," "A Drunken Khevsur," *Alaverdoba*, (A religious festival in Kakheti) and others.

Talented painters — Mose Toidze, Anton Gogishvili and Niko Piroshmanishvili — began their creative work at the end of the 1890s. Piroshmani's works later on won worldwide recognition.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Iakob Nikoladze became the founder of Georgian professional sculpture. The very first work of this great artist, Shota Rustaveli's sculpture, won universal approval at the Caucasian artists' exhibition in 1894. Nikoladze's creative work presented itself more completely later.

Technical progress conditioned the appearance of another new branch of culture — photography. This innovation appeared in Georgia in the 1840s. One of the first Georgian photographers whose works became socially important was Alexandre Roinashvili. In 1865, he opened his own photo studio in Tbilisi. He traveled with his photo-camera about all parts of Georgia and photographed many interesting exhibits. He also took photos of the Georgian writers and artists and preserved the faces of these prominent public figures for posterity. Roinashvili's photo-exhibitions were held in the following cities in Russia in 1887 and 1888: Astrakhan, Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Music

The Georgian people created extremely original and thrilling music in the form of polyphonic folk songs and church chants over the course of centuries. In the second half of the nineteenth century, new secular professional musical art was created. The singer Kharlampi Savaneli and the pianist and composer Alioz Mizandari were its creators.

Savaneli was the first to form a choir and to give a concert. It was also he who together with Mizandari founded a Georgian music school in Tbilisi. In this school, which was the predecessor of the Conservatoire, new specialists of music were trained by the founder of the Georgian pianists' school Alioz Mizandari, M. Ipolitov-Ivanov and others.

A committee whose aim was to restore church chants was of paramount importance. It was formed by A. Benashvili, M. Ipolitov-Ivanov, P. Karbelashvili and Ph. Koridze. The committee wrote down the notes of many Georgian church chants, published them and prevented them from being forgotten.



Choirs conducted by Meliton Balanchivadze, Sandro Kavsadze and Dzuku Lolua played an important part in the history of Georgian musical culture. Lado Agniashvili's ethnographic choir "The Georgian Secular Choir" must be specially mentioned. It was conducted by a Czech musician – Joseph Ratil. L. Agniashvili did a great deal for the restoration of Georgian singing and its further development.

Georgian performers also made great progress. Professional musicians such as Alioz Mizandari (piano), Andria Karashvili (violin) and Vano Sarajishvili (violoncello) became widely known. The composer and teacher A. Karashvili was the author of popular songs like *Isev shen* (You Again), *Davrdomili sneuli* (A Poor Sick Man), etc. Vano Sarajishvili, called "Georgia's Nightingale" was one of the founders of Georgian professional vocal art. Philimon Koridze as an opera singer (bass) sang on the stage of the "La Scala" in Milan. He was a soloist in St. Petersburg's Maria Theater and also had a successful concert tour in South America.

In the 1890s the first Georgian opera *Tamar Tsbieri* (*Sly Tamar*) was created by the composer Meliton Balanchivadze. Fragments of this opera were first staged in St. Petersburg in 1879). It was also Meliton Balanchivadze who composed the first Georgian lyrical love songs *Shen getrpi marad* ("I will always love you"), "Nana" ("Lullaby") and *Odesats gitsker* ("When I Look at You").

Georgian cultural workers had creative contacts with the cultural forces of Russia and Western Europe. A great many foreign writers and scientists took an interest in Georgia and the life of its people. Griboedov's classical works were written in Tsinandali and Tbilisi; Georgia became the "poetic mother country" of M. Lermontov. L. Tolstoi's first literary work was written in Georgia. The Georgian theme was reflected in A. Pushkin's and A. Odoevski's works. P. Tchaikovski. N. Rubinstein and other Russian composers used Georgian melodies in their works.

The famous French writer Alexandre Dumas traveled in Georgia in 1858 and published his impressions in France in a big book. In 1880, the German writer and a great friend of Georgia, Arthur Leist, settled down in Tbilisi. He published noteworthy works about Georgia's history and culture.

Marjorie Wardrop and others acquainted English readers with several masterpieces from Georgian literature, among them *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*.

Georgian people took great interest in Western literature. Some Georgians read the works of foreign writers in their original languages, while others read them in translations.

From the second half of the nineteenth century readers could enjoy reading the classics of world literature such as Shakespeare, Byron, Hugo and Balzac in Georgian. Not only the monuments of foreign belles-lettres were translated and published but historical, scientific and other popular books and booklets as well.



Georgia in 1900-1917

The dynamics and social structure of the population at the beginning of the 20th century

The beginning of the 20th century in Georgia did not differ at all from the end of the 19th century. The country was still divided into Tbilisi and Kutaisi provinces and it still remained a rightless periphery of the Russian empire ruled by the commander-in-chief of the Caucasus, who was appointed by the Russian emperor. In 1905 the post of the viceroy was restored. The last commander-in-chief was general Golitsin. The post of the viceroy was held by Count Vorontsov-Dashkov first and then, in 1915-1917 by the great prince Nicholas Romanov.

At the beginning of the new century certain changes were carried out in the territorial and administrative arrangement of Georgia. In 1903 Batumi region was established (consisting of Batumi and Artvini districts) within the Kutaisi province, and in 1904 Sukhumi district (Abkhazia) was deprived of its north-west part (Gagra district including Sochi) and joined to the Black Sea province.

This system of ruling and territorial and administrative division had not changed till the collapse of the autocracy. But the changes in the social and economic life of the empire, the slow but still progressive advance of capitalist relations, had a conspicuous impact upon our country as well.

The number of the population in Georgia grew considerably after the coming of Russians. The total number of the inhabitants of the country had almost trebled by the beginning of the 20th century compared to that of 1801 and it became two million. This unusual increase was not caused only by natural growth; the mechanical growth, which was the colonial demographic policy of the empire, played an important role as well. During one century more than 100 thousand Russians settled in Georgia (over 5.3% of the whole population). The number of Armenians grew four times (10.3%) and the number of Moslems (Tatar-Turks) grew three times.

Several thousand Greeks, Germans and representatives of other nationalities (Poles, Estonians, Ukrainians, Latvians, Kurds, Lezghins, etc.) were brought to Georgia. The artificial migrational processes caused a considerable change in the national body to the detriment of Georgians. The specific share of Georgians in the whole population considerably decreased. The decrease was 10%, going down from 79% to 69%.

The absolute majority (84.2%) of the Georgian population lived in the country, engaged in traditional farming.

The process of urbanization was developing, which was expressed not only by the increase of the urban population but by the growth of the number of towns as well. At the beginning of the 19th century there were thirty-one towns in Georgia and in five of them there lived more than ten thousand people. Big towns were Tbilisi (160 thousand inhabitants), Kutaisi (33 thousand) and Batumi (29 thousand).

Akhalsikhe, Gori, Poti and Sukhumi represented middle sized towns. Telavi, Signaghi, Akhalkalaki, Ozurgeti and Dusheti had the status of small towns. Of the town type



settlements some were administrative centers, some were junctions, others were trade, industrial or resort towns.

Western Georgia was more densely inhabited than Eastern Georgia. Twenty per cent of the whole population lived in the mountainous region. The fact, that more people lived in the country and in the mountains than in towns, were the evidence that Georgia was at a low level of social and economic development.

Georgian population, like other inhabitants of the empire was divided into several ranks, classes or layers. The whole society was undergoing a sharp social differentiation. The process of class division was becoming deeper and stronger.

The majority of the nobility (5.6% of the population) still preferred to live in the country. The new reality was painfully reflected on the nobility. Only an insignificant part of Georgian landowners managed to keep in step with the rhythm and challenge of the time. The number of those landowners, who had created profitable economy and added something to the property left by their ancestors, could be counted on one's fingers. The majority of the noblemen sold their lands for a song or mortgaged them to the banks, which meant an ominous future not only for the Georgian aristocracy, but for the whole Georgia as well.

The living conditions of numerous aznaurs (petty landowners) were deplorable. Constant poverty and indigence was their lot. Many of them left their old way of life and worked in the fields and vineyards like peasants—ploughed, sowed, looked after the cattle, but having very small plots of land, were not able to escape poverty.

The dominant position of the Georgian nobility was losing its foundation. Without this support, the privileges of the Georgian aristocracy faded, to say nothing of the general diminishing of the prestige of the nobility.

The most numerous category of the population was peasantry (83.6%). A Georgian peasant never avoided labor and hard work, he killed his troubles and problems in struggling with the land, however, because of the taxes to be paid to the landowner or to the state, he couldn't escape being indigent. Together with the traditional quitrent and duty the land worker had to pay a high excise for using the pastures and forests which still belonged to their masters.

Some 40-45% of peasants managed with great difficulty to buy out their allotment, but because of the smallness of the plot of land could hardly support their families, could hardly make both ends meet.

The main nucleus of the Georgian peasantry was middle peasants. There were rich and well-to-do peasants too, who had bought scores of hectares of land and cultivated more on lease at the expense of voluntarily hired workers. In Kakheti, Borchalo and some other places, some peasants had become big owners and besides a large plot of land owned a lot of domestic animals. In the mountainous part of Eastern Georgia many peasants had flocks of several thousand sheep, a few of the peasants had large herds of cattle and horses, looked after by hired hands. Many peasants in Western Georgia also managed to increase their property by improving their farming or by engaging themselves in production and trade. Such well-to-do, skilful and able peasants are referred to as Kulaks or village big bugs in the Soviet historiography. They were given this derogatory name because, as the Soviet ideology explained, they became rich by the exploitation of other peasants. This is not true.



It is true, that well-off peasants used hired hands but they paid them, and themselves worked day and night. By increasing their property they gave others a chance to find a job (if we explain it in modern terminology they created new jobs).

Poverty-stricken, landless and homeless peasants were not unfamiliar to Georgian reality. Part of the indigent peasants earned their living by working as farmhands or servants; others went away in search of a living.

The living conditions of migrants were deplorable as well. In spite of the fact that they lived and worked in one and the same place for many years, they still remained landless and were eager to own some land.

Among the urban population bourgeoisie was distinguished. It was occupying advanced positions in society gradually. This newly created but developing class exceeded in property the degrading feudal aristocracy and now contended with the latter in their rights too. The development of bourgeoisie was a progressive phenomenon in itself, but from the national point of view it created a lot of problems. The owners of factories or plants or other manufacturers were not Georgians, they were foreign capitalists. The trade was also mostly in the hands of non-Georgians. West European, Armenian, Russian, Greek or Turk businessmen were at the head of big enterprises, commercial companies, joint-stock companies, firms importing goods and so on.

Among numerous Adelhkanovs, Mantashevs, Aramians, Rotshilds, Zemels, Serebriakovs and Siderids, the names of famous Georgian manufacturers: David Sarajisvili, brothers Zubalashvili, Akaki Khoshtaria, Mitropane Lagidze and their signboards twinkled like diamonds.

The interests of scanty Georgian bourgeoisie clashed with the interests and influence of both metropolis and Armenian bourgeoisie which had become strong in Georgia. This conflict within the representatives of the developing class, which was created on the economic grounds, acquired a national-political character by and by and that of ethnic opposition.

One of the significant features of the post-reform period of Georgia, which continued even in the 20th century, was the irreversible growth of urbanization. The population of Georgian towns was growing at the expense of workers engaged in industrial enterprises, traders, staff of attendants, craftsmen, and so on. This intermediate layer, the so-called petty bourgeoisie exceeded greatly the number of other city dwellers and showed the real worth of the city.

In the social structure of the population one of the growing forces – the working class was becoming prominent. The specific share of the workers, who migrated to town and were engaged in industry, grew considerably. The number of workers was increased not only by Georgian peasants, who had no land, but by the paupers coming in great numbers from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia. The colonial authorities of the Caucasus fostered and encouraged this process, broke the ethnic uniformity of workers, making workers' body multinational.

Hard living and working conditions, miserable payment, no political rights, etc. formed this part of the society as an irreconcilable power against the existing regime.

Other classes were the clergy (1.6% of the population) and merchants (0.3%). Of other social layers the more distinguished were the intelligentsia gathered round the cultural and educational institutions (theater, school, the society of spreading literacy) or newspapers



and magazines. These people had made their intellectual work their profession, the means of existence.

The life of Georgian writers, painters, directors, teachers and doctors did not differ greatly from the life of the representatives of the lower layers of the nation. The absolute majority of the intelligentsia lived in poverty. But it is necessary to say that the people, who were engaged in creative or educational work, had great respect, understanding, help and gratitude of the society as a kind of compensation for their miserable salary or scanty royalty.

Tbilisi was the main arena for the Georgian intelligentsia. The same can be said about Kutaisi where from the beginning of the new century a powerful national center was established. It is noteworthy that Batumi, Sukhumi, Gori and many other district towns and large villages, that were engaged in wide-range cultural and educational activities, also had their own intelligentsia.

The role of intelligentsia was very great in the life of the nation who had no statehood. It was mainly the intelligentsia that expressed the innermost ideas and mood of the people. It was a flagship of the transformation of the social life; it undertook the leadership of the nation fighting for freedom and was carrying out the mission solely until the appearance of new political parties.

The Establishment of New Parties

The Creation of Georgian Social-Democratic Organizations

The beginning of the 20th century was remarkable in Georgia by its significant novelty – the creation of political parties. This phenomenon had its preconditions.

The development of capitalist relations made the social differentiation of the Georgian population even deeper. The society became versatile. The nation, which had had a common aspiration, appeared to have different interests respective to classes and layers after the division into new social classes or layers. It was the very interests that political parties undertook to express and to defend.

In the circumstances of imperial despotism, especially in such a colonial country as Georgia, the range of political activities was extremely limited. That is why the process of the formation of political parties took quite a long time here. No wonder that both in Russia and Georgia the first political organizations were formed secretly, underground and acted illegally.

Another anomaly of the Georgian reality was the fact that in this oppressed country, deprived of statehood, the first political power, with the idea of socialism, rallied to fight for the social freedom of workers rather than the restoration of the statehood and national independence.

The promotion of socialism in Georgia was stipulated by several circumstances, among them, together with the acute social problem, one very important factor must be emphasized, namely: the population, desperate under the Russian regime, estranged from the church, perceived the preaching of socialism ideology, colored with Messianism and the elements of divine justice, as a religious teaching.



The social-democratic organization – the Third Estate, which was established in 1892-1893, was a political unity, it never became a political party. Such circles and groups appeared in other towns of the empire as well. In order to unite them ideologically and organizationally the congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Party (RSDWP) was convened in Minsk in 1898. The congress declared the creation of a unified Marxist party, but was not able to legalize its foundational documents – its program and regulations.

The representatives of the Third Estate (N. Zhordania, S. Jibladze, I. Ramishvili, K. Chkheize, Ph. Makharadze, V. Darchiashvili and others), did not take part in the above mentioned congress. They tried to maintain an independent organization, which they managed to do for a certain period of time. But there appeared two groupings in the organization: one grouping, to some extent, shared the ideas of the western European social-democrats; the other preferred the ideas of the Russian social-democrats.

In 1901, independently from the Third Estate, the organization, which followed purely Russian social-democracy ideas, “the Estate of Revolutionary Social-Democrats” (J. Jugashvili, V. Ketskhoveri, A. Enukidze, etc.) was established. They organized a secret printing-house in Baku and founded an illegal newspaper “Brdzola” (“Struggle”). It was with the efforts of this estate that in the autumn of 1901 Tbilisi city social-democratic organization was established and its committee (V. Tsabadze-chairman, J. Jugashvili, S. Jugeli, Z. Chodrishvili, etc.) were elected.

On J. Jugashvili’s initiative, such a group was also established in Batumi at the end of the same year. At the beginning of 1902 Tbilisi and Batumi organizations became subordinate to RSDWP. Russian orientation became dominant in the Third Estate too. This was proved by the fact that the representatives of the Third Estate took part in the formation of the Caucasian union of RSDWP and committee in March, 1903. Soon the newly established Gurian and Imereti-Samegrelo social-democratic committees joined that unity too.

Russian Marxists–Lenin, Plekhanov, Martov, etc., were eager to unite all the Caucasian, and all Russian social-democratic committees, groups or circles. In 1901 they started to publish the newspaper “Iskra” (Spark) and began preparing for the creation of the workers’ united party within the empire. This type of a political organization, under the name of RSDWP acquired its final status in the summer of 1903. The workers’ party from the very beginning divided into two wings: Bolsheviks, who supported Lenin and Mensheviks who followed Martov. In spite of the inner faction opposition and bitter polemic the party was formally united till 1912.

Bolshevism considered itself to be the only true follower of Marxism. Its leaders thought that from the beginning of the 20th century it was Russia that became the centre of the international revolutionary movement. In such circumstances Russian working class together with peasants was to undertake the task of overthrowing the tsarist government. After the success the proletariat dictatorship would be established in the country. From Russia the revolution would spread all over the world, class system would be destroyed everywhere and it would be the final victory of socialism.

Class struggle was also the highest principle of Menshevism, which also rallied to the cause of abolishing the autocracy. The final goal of Mensheviks was also the socialistic transformation of the society. Mensheviks did not exclude that it was possible to achieve



socialism not only by the revolutionary way but by peaceful, parliamentary struggle as well.

Both factions of social-democracy were based on cosmopolitan ideology and showed nihilism in national issue. They recognized the right of nations to self-determination only verbally. As for Bolsheviks, they were categorically against any autonomy and fought its supporters. The idea of political autonomy of Georgia was unacceptable for Mensheviks as well, who were inclined rather to a cultural-national autonomy. Only a small group of Georgian Mensheviks (V. Darchiashvili, A. Chkhenkeli, I. Gomarteli, etc.) were distinguished by their devotion to the national-territorial autonomy.

In the Georgian social-democracy Bolsheviks gained majority at first, but from 1905 Mensheviks exceeded Bolshevik-Leninists both in number and in the influence on the masses of people.

It is noteworthy neither of them was independent; they were both subordinated to the central structures of the party.

Both Georgian Bolsheviks (J. Jugashvili (Stalin), M. Tskhakaia, P. Japaridze, etc.) and Mensheviks (N. Zhordania, I. Ramishvili, K. Chkheidze, E. Gegechkori, I. Tsereteli) played an active role in RSDWP. Many Georgian social-democrats became recognized party leaders and political figures within the empire.

Georgian Socialist-Federalist Party

At the beginning of the 20th century socialist teaching became widely spread and rather fashionable and popular. The representatives of the Georgian democratic intelligentsia - Giorgi Laskhishvili, Kita Abashidze, Archil Jorjadze, Tedo Sakhokia, Samson Pirtskhalava, Grigol Rtskhiladze and others, who were gathered round the newspaper "Tsnobis Purseli" tried to transfer this cosmopolitan ideology to national, Georgian basis, to reconcile and accord the socialist ideology with that of the national one. It was a kind of intermediate group between the national trend of the Tergdaleulni and the Third Estate, the followers of Marxism. This group, as G. Laskhishvili said, "Was close to the former according to their national ideal and close to the latter according to their social striving".

The role of the leader of the above mentioned group was performed by Archil Jorjadze, a person with a broad, progressive European education. The theory of the "Common Action Ground" belongs to Archil Jorjadze, it was the continuation of Ilia Chachavadze's idea of uniting the nation in new circumstances. National consolidation, the nation's consent, was a necessary precondition for the sovereignty and restoration of Georgia. In Jorjadze's opinion, the very common action ground could solve such problems as: the protection of the Georgian language and culture, the preservation of the lands of the country and economy, the development of trade and industry and so on.

The main aspiration of the "Tsnobis Purseli" group was the national freedom of Georgia, the restoration of its statehood. They thought it necessary to form a political organization - a party to achieve this aim. The leading nucleus of the future party: A. Jorjadze, G. Laskhishvili, V. Lortkipanidze, A. Dekanozishvili, was created in the autumn of 1901.



At first they wanted to publish an illegal newspaper in Tbilisi, but later they decided that it was better to found their own printing-house abroad and they sent their representatives to France.

On May 1, 1903, on the initiative of A. Jorjadze and G. Dekanozishvili the publication of the newspaper "Sakartvelo" began in Paris. It was a national-political fortnightly newspaper published in the Georgian and French languages. It was spread in Georgia secretly. The newspaper mainly propagated the autonomy of Georgia, covered various social and political problems, widened the circle of supporters and rallied national forces.

In April, 1904, on the initiative of the "Sakartvelo" leaders the conference of the representatives of Georgian revolutionary groups and ideological-political trends was held in Geneva. Besides the representatives of the newspaper "Sakartvelo", anarchist, socialist-revolutionaries and national-democrats also participated. Among them were: A. Jorjadze, G. Dekanozishvili, V. Cherkezishvili, M. Tsereteli and others, Georgian social-democrats, under the leadership of N. Zhordania, were present at the opening of the conference but they could not find a common language with the others and left the conference.

Many problems were discussed at the conference, such as the possibility of the restoration of the Georgian statehood, agrarian problems, the relations with the revolutionary organizations within the empire, and so on. The main achievement of the Geneva conference was the creation of the "Revolutionary Party of Georgian Socialist-Federalists".

The party consisted of the representatives of intellectual and petty-bourgeois circles. This newly-established political organization was of a socialist trend, though at the beginning there were Georgian national-democrats and anarchists among them as well. National-democrats and anarchists left the party and continued working independently.

The central point of the Federalist Party program was the demand of national-territorial autonomy of Georgia.

The party ideologists believed that every non-Russian people, oppressed by the empire had the right to national freedom. After overthrowing the autocracy these peoples, as political autonomies, would unite in the Russian state on federation principle.

The Georgian Socialist-Federalist party recognized and used both legal and illegal means of struggle, it co-operated with other oppositional and revolutionary groupings, took part even in armed actions, and tried to achieve its goal in a peaceful way too—through its deputies in the Russian state council (Duma).

The Organizations of Socialist-Revolutionaries in Georgia

The ideologists of the socialist revolutionaries' political trend were the former followers of the Narodnik movement or the successors of the latter. Neonarodnik circles, which appeared in various towns of the empire at the end of the 19th century and preached narodnik socialism, became the basis of the future party.

In such circles, established in Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi besides Georgians (M. Kipiani, I. Jabadari, S. Chrelashvili, and others), there were Russian neo-narodniks as well.

Neonarodniks, like their predecessor Narodniks, focused their attention on the struggle for social freedom rather than on the national problem, that is why the number of their followers in Georgia was not large.



Georgian Neonarodniks (the same socialist-revolutionaries) could not create an independent political party. One part of them joined the socialist-federalist party, others, in the form of local organizations, joined the socialist-revolutionary party, which was founded in Russia in 1902.

Socialist-revolutionaries expressed the interests of the peasant population. They strove to transform Russia democratically; they did not deny the important role of the workers' and peasants' mass movement, but they believed that the essential means of the political struggle against autocracy was political terror. In the agrarian sphere the socialist-revolutionaries supported the socialization of lands, which meant the giving of the lands to the village communities for further fair redistribution.

The influence of the socialist-revolutionaries on the social and political life of Georgia was unimportant. In the ideological opposition they were not up to the mark compared with other parties.

Socialist-revolutionary detachments took an active part in 1905-1907 revolutions. Later their activities were not of great importance or range.

Georgian socialist-revolutionaries separated from Russian socialist-revolutionaries only after the restoration of Georgian sovereignty and in June, 1918 they established an independent party. The outstanding leaders of the Georgian socialist-revolutionary party were: Leo Shengelaia, Gigo Natadze, Ivane Lortkipanidze, Ivane and Ioseb Gobechia, and others.

Anarchists

Anarchism is one of the trends of socialism. It repudiated state and was against any system and norms that limited human freedom; it substantiated the necessity of private property and its ideal was a union of federations which consisted of free communes.

Georgian revolutionaries got acquainted with this doctrine in Europe and became its active propagators.

Varlam Cherkezishvili, who became one of the most prominent leaders of the international anarchist movement, was widely known in Western European anarchist circles. He became a revolutionary when he was a student, he was a member of Ishutin's and Karakozov's narodnic circle in Moscow, then he worked in Nechaev's secret organization for which he was exiled to Siberia. The young revolutionary managed to escape from the exile, left for Europe and got into contact with Peter Kropotkin. V. Cherkezishvili became famous for his work "Pages from the History of Socialism", which was published in the French language in Paris, in 1896, and was translated into many languages.

According to the Georgian anarchist, classics of Marxism appropriated many a thesis from their predecessor thinkers themselves about the regulations of the development of society, and some other scholarly achievements were ascribed to Marx and Engels by their followers. V. Cherkezishvili blamed K. Marx and F. Engels for plagiarism. He substantiated that the well-known "Communist Manifesto" was not an original work, that it was copied from the book by the French socialist V. Consideran "The Principles of Socialism", and so on.



It was a powerful blow on Marxism. Many competent representatives of the trend launched into fierce polemic against V. Cherkezishvili to defend their ideology, among them were K. Kautski; G. Plekhanov, J. Stalin, and others.

Together with spreading the anarchist doctrine, V. Cherkezishvili spared no efforts to defend the national rights of Georgia in the international arena; he fought bravely to free his country from the colonial yoke of the empire.

Another well-known Georgian anarchist Komando Gogelia worked mainly abroad. In 1903 he founded a Russian anarchist newspaper "Khleb I Volya" ("Bread and Freedom") in Geneva. This newspaper fostered greatly to vivify anarchist ideas in Russia. Unlike V. Cherkezishvili, K. Gogelia took a cosmopolitan position. On arriving in Georgia he dissociated himself from anarchist-communists and became the follower of anarcho-syndicalism.

A Georgian politician and scientist Mikhako Tsereteli contributed greatly to the establishment of anarchist views. Besides his numerous publicistic letters, which he published in various periodicals Georgian people memorized Mikhako Tsereteli by his ardent speech at Ilia Chavchavadze's funeral. His scholarly research "Nation and Mankind" was printed in Tbilisi in 1910. After that M. Tsereteli dissociated himself from the anarchist movement and joined the lines of active fighters for the sovereignty of Georgia.

National-Democrats

The national-democratic party of Georgia was organizationally registered rather late, in 1917. But theoretical prerequisites were being established from the second half of the 19th century.

National-democratism in Georgia became the ideology of the struggle for national-political freedom; its characteristic feature was the striving for sovereignty on the basis of the principles of democracy and private property.

The purpose, goals and tasks of the political parties of the occupied, colonial nation were to be special; this was the opinion of national-democrats. "In the country where there is no national statehood, its substitution must be the party imbued with national and democratic ideas", they thought.

Such a mission could be fulfilled not by the party representing a separate class or social layer, but by a political force which expressed the interests of the whole nation. It was such a political organization – above class and corresponding with the aspiration of the whole nation – which the politicians with national – democratic views tried to create in 1905-1906. Before that some of them were united round the newspapers "Tsnobis Purtseli" (News Page) and "Iveria", and from 1901 spread proclamations in the name of the national-democratic committee. Part of the national democrats joined federalists; however they did not share their socialist ideology and were the right wing of the party.

During the first revolution of Russia national-democrats (Giorgi Gvazava, Ekvtime Takaishvili, Pavle Tumanishvili, Simon Kipiani, Niko Tavdgiridze and others) together with Ilia Chavchavadze worked out, printed and spread the party program and statutes. But it was not followed by the foundation of the political organization. The defeat of the revolution and Ilia Chavchavadze's tragic death delayed the fulfilment of the intention for a few years.



National-democratism remained an ideological trend for a long time, but it was gathering strength and united new groups of patriots from different layers of society under its flag.

National-democrats launched a wide campaign to defend historical, political and juridical rights of the Georgian nation. The periodicals of this ideology ("Eri" (Nation), "Klde" (Rock), "Tavisupali Sakartvelo" (Free Georgia) "Imereti", "Samshoblo" (Motherland), "Sakartvelo" (Georgia), etc.), promoted the growth of the national self-consciousness of Georgians, strengthened the aspiration of the people for national statehood and freedom.

After the decision of convening the state council in Russia and especially after the publication of the king's manifesto of October 17, 1905 which gave the right to found political unities legally, several new organizations appeared in the political field of Georgia (Georgian radical party, Georgian democratic party, the constitutional democratic party of Georgian autonomists, a party of patriots), some of them were the local branches of this or that Russian party (such as the Tbilisi organization of Constitutional-Democrats, etc.). These organizations were established mainly with the aim of taking part in the Russian state дума and they did not exist long.

There were parties in Georgia created on ethnic grounds such as a branch of Azerbaijanian Musavat and Armenian Dashnaktsutiun and Hnatchki parties.

The appearance of the political organizations quickened the pulse of the nation, gave stimulus to the rising of social life, and fostered the activation of broad masses of the population, and so on. But, at the same time, the creation of the parties of different orientation and purposes caused the dissociation and even opposition of the national-social forces and considerably hindered the current process of national consolidation.

The Russian administration of the Caucasus was eager to distract the attention of the Georgian people and especially of its active part—intelligentsia from the national problems. Enjoying the relatively long stability in the foreign affairs of the Russian empire the authorities seemed to have realized their wish: the different layers of the Georgian population, differentiated socially and in opposition to one another, could not be an indivisible, united national force fighting against the autocracy. In one part of society conformism gained ground, in another one a feeling of national nihilism became dominant because of too much cosmopolitan social-democratic ideology. In spite of all that, it was evident that Georgian thinking and social life was awakening. The consciousness of the majority of the nation was still sound, Georgians had preserved their national face.

Social-Political Movement in 1900-1904

National movement

The new century gave birth to new hopes of freedom and strengthened them even more. The discontent of the Georgian society with the national and social oppression of the imperial regime increased from day to day. Almost all the strata of the population opposed the existing reality more vigorously.

The viceroy of the Caucasus and his numerous administration easily suppressed the uprising caused by agrarian or social problems with the help of the gendarmerie and the police, and sometimes by using army detachments. The most dangerous problem for the



regime was the aspiration to national freedom of the non-Russian peoples within the borders of the empire. Any manifestation of national movement was considered to be separatism by the government and was severely punished. The Russian government tried to overcome the separatist tendencies by ideological-propagandist means alongside the repressive measures. Here is a characteristic example of this:

In 1901 a hundred years had passed since the abolition of Kartl-Kakheti Kingdom and the incorporation of Eastern Georgia into the Russian Empire. The governmental structures celebrated this "jubilee" date, and the press was to present this case as if Georgians themselves were celebrating the centenary of Georgia's incorporation into Russia. The newspaper "Kavkaz", the Moscow and St. Petersburg publications shamelessly declared that since a century before Georgia had opened the door of the Dariali Pass to the Russian troops of her own free will the Georgians had co-existed with Russians peacefully and they had nothing to fight for.

The Georgian aristocracy got hold of the idea of "the voluntary incorporation" and took part in the celebrations. The ring-leaders of the nobility hoped that this would help deny the idea of the Georgian separatism, spread in Russia. They also hoped that if the Tsar's government did not let them have an elective district council or the institute of jurors, they would agree to the idea of founding a university in Tbilisi.

The Georgian people did not take part in this political show. On the contrary, the progressive intelligentsia was offended by this disgraceful "jubilee". The group of the newspaper "Tsnobis Purtseli" was planning to organize a demonstration but finally they decided on issuing political leaflets. During the days of the "celebration" (25-29 September, 1901) four political leaflets were spread in Tbilisi, Telavi and other towns, signed by "the Committee of Georgian National-Democrats". In these leaflets they condemned Russia's violence in Georgia and considered the restoration of national freedom to be the only way of saving the country. "It is necessary for the welfare of people to restore the political liberty of Georgia, for the main reason of our degradation is the domination of Russia's government in Georgia, the government that tries to destroy the Georgian people. The Georgians must remember it well and get ready to defend the people's national interests", was written in one of the leaflets.

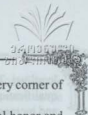
The contents of the leaflets showed that the national movement acquired a political character.

The festively celebrated "jubilee" did not impress the Georgian people greatly. The expectations of the nobility also turned out to be futile, they were only given certain privileges in paying taxes.

There were quite a few other mechanisms intended for the assimilation of conquered peoples in the ideological arsenal of autocracy. One of such mechanisms was the falsification of history, making the people forget their past. This method of destroying the national consciousness was widely used in Georgia.

The ideologists of the empire, from the very start, inculcated the idea that Georgia was a backward country of low culture, and Russia had not only saved it from extinction, but was its enlightener, bringing culture to it.

Backward and uneducated people would not have been able to create such specimens of literature, art; such specimens of spiritual and material culture that even today are the pride of the treasury of the world civilization. The antiquity of the Georgian culture, its



greatness was proved by the multiplicity of Christian churches, erected in every corner of the country, and their incomparable and unique frescos.

This immortal treasure, alongside the original historical past is a national honor and pride, the memory of the Georgians' identity. If the Tsar's government did not belittle and destroy this memory it would not be able to achieve its aim in Georgia, it would not be able to Russianize Georgia. That was why by the will of secular authorities and exarchs the interior of many Georgian churches and monasteries was whitewashed to conceal the impressive traces of the ancient Georgian culture and make it invisible.

The continuation of these harmful activities is the falsification of the Georgian history by some Armenian and foreign scholars, bribed by Armenian nationalistic circles; they declared part of the Georgian land and cultural inheritance to be Armenian. All this was done in agreement with the official bodies (the works of anti-Georgian character were published in Moscow, St. Petersburg, in Russian newspapers and magazines, etc.).

The national Georgian public figures (D. Bakradze, Il. Chavchavadze, etc.) opposed the falsifiers of Georgia's past vigorously and disclosed the pseudo scholarly character of their research. It was a struggle to preserve the historical memory, to defend the national rights of the Georgian people. This was part of the national movement. This struggle was led at the beginning of the 20th century by the public figures born in the 60-s.

The Tergdaleulni (the public figures that had received their education in Russia, beyond the River Terek. Tergi means Terek in Georgian. Tergdaleulni means those who drank the water of the Terek), thought that there was much energy and strength in the historic past of Georgia. History, in their opinion, had a function of "ideological arms", though they considered the unbiased analysis of the past to be necessary. Herewith, some eminent representatives of patriotic intelligentsia (Iakob Gogebashvili, Akaki Tsereteli, Mose Janashvili) thought it possible to defend history by "enlarging merits and diminishing shortcomings" to broaden the national consciousness of the people.

The then young historian, Ivane Javakhishvili, had quite an opposite position. He wrote that we should not look for deliverance in the past, attention should be paid to the present, we should think "of life and action", etc. Ivane Javakhishvili thought that to realize the national ideal the society should be more active, economics should be developed and culture revived. His publicist work "Patriotism and Science" is imbued with such aspiration. This work was published in 1904. The scholar thought it more important for the nation and country to learn and take into consideration the shortcomings of the past. The aforementioned book advised the society to become more active, to do practical work, orient to the present and take care of the future.

In the situation when the tsar's government did not satisfy Georgia's national demands and needs at all it was necessary that the Georgians should act together and more courageously to do important things for the society. In this respect it is noteworthy to mention the starting of construction the building of a gymnasium for the nobility in October 1900. This gymnasium, from the very start, was considered to be a great center of Georgian culture and science – a university. The construction of the building for the university became possible due to the society's great desire and unity.

The beginning of the 20th century is characterized by the revival of the Georgian social life. Cultural-educational and other institutions in which the society took greater interest became more animated, but the people's civic consciousness had not reached a desirable



level yet. The Georgian electorate who had the right to vote according to their property qualification was still passive during the city elections of deputies. To improve this situation and increase the percentage of the Georgian element in the city self-governing institutions (especially in Tbilisi) Niko Nikoladze proposed to hold elections according to nationalities in a proportional order, but the government did not agree to it.

At the beginning of the new century new intellectual forces appeared in the field of action. This generation was mainly brought up on Tergdaleulni's spiritual heritage, they greatly appreciated Ilia, Akaki and their other teachers, but not everybody chose to remain in their camp. Influenced by "the transfiguration of life" many of them joined various parties and estates. The unity of the national movement began breaking up, however, it must be mentioned that this movement had a basically established doctrine and a plan of activities beginning with the 900-s.

It was Archil Jorjadze who worked out the conception of the national movement, based on the ideas of the Tergdaleulni and suitable for the new reality, and presented it to the society in a theory of "The Basis of United Activities". The plan of practical activities and struggle was also worked out by A. Jorjadze and the persons holding similar views. They presented this plan as a demand of Georgia's national-territorial political autonomy. This demand appeared in the newspaper "Sakartvelo", published in Paris, in 1903. Some patriots, connected with this publication, thought of Georgia's complete independence, but the more realistic idea of the demand of the autonomy had more supporters. Soon the demand of Georgia's autonomy became the main political slogan of the Georgian national-liberation movement.

Workers' uprising

The further development of capitalism, the increase of factories, plants and other industrial enterprises considerably widened the possibilities of people's employment. The poor population from villages, looking for work, flooded towns and cities. These people, tired of unbearable conditions of a peasant's life, lacked professional skill, therefore they were compelled to do the hardest work for very little pay. The owners of enterprises, interested in profit, did not trouble themselves with doing their duty by them, for the market was full of manpower, their number growing day by day.

The labor and living conditions in the absolute majority of enterprises did not satisfy even the elementary demands. The conditions of women and children were particularly unbearable. Their pay was much lower than even the meager wages of workers.

Workers' hard life was made more unbearable by their having absolutely no political rights. Georgia's working class, in this respect, was in worse conditions than Russia's proletariat. Georgian workers were even deprived of those insignificant rights that their Russian fellow-workers had. There were practically no laws for factory workers in Georgia. Trade-unions and other organizations, protecting worker's rights, had not appeared in Georgia yet.

It is quite natural therefore that workers' movement of protest should have spread widely. The only novelty was that social-democratic organizations became leaders of this movement. Socialist ideas, seasoned with propagandist demagoguery, found a fertile soil in



the working-class circles. Social-democrats managed to gain the workers' confidence and got hold of the reins of this movement. It was the social-democrats who were at the head of the workers' important uprising beginning in the 1900-s.

Tbilisi was distinguished by the level of workers' concentration among other towns. Here one of the enterprises, having the greatest number of workers, the main depots of the Transcaucasian railway, was situated. It became the center of the protest demonstrations of the proletariat.

The political manifestations of Georgia's workers began in 1900 when the day of the workers' international solidarity – the 1st of May was celebrated. In August of the same year a general strike of workers was organized in Tbilisi. The government began to carry out reprisals. Martial law was declared in the city. Over a hundred of workers were arrested. More than a thousand were dismissed from work. Many of them were made to leave Tbilisi and go back to their villages, escorted by the police.

In 1901 Tbilisi workers celebrated May-Day in the city center. The participants of the demonstration came into collision with Cossacks, police and military detachments. The demonstrators were dispersed. 14 workers were wounded, the leaders were arrested. May-Day in Tbilisi had a great resonance throughout the Empire. The newspaper "Iskra" considered it to be "the beginning of the revolutionary movement in the Caucasus", and said that it was a remarkable event.

Batumi workers' demonstrations were also distinguished by their good organization and steadiness. The first great strike was arranged in Mantashev's factory in January, 1902. In February the workers of Rotshield's factory also went on strike. The threat of the local government did not scare the strikers. They refused to continue working. The military governor of Kutaisi ordered to arrest several hundreds of workers and put them to prison. This strained the situation even more. As a sign of protest six thousand workers came out into the street on March 9th, 1902. They marched with red banners and revolutionary songs to set their arrested comrades free. The prison was defended by the army. The soldiers intended to disperse the demonstrators, but the workers started throwing stones at them and tried to disarm them. The army was ordered to open fire. Fifteen workers were killed, fifty were wounded.

The funeral of the killed turned into a crowded political demonstration. The police did not dare to put up resistance. The disturbances in Batumi in February and March were headed by the city committee of the Social-Democratic Party.

The workers' revolutionary activity increased in 1903. The strike that began in Baku oil-fields on February 4 spread over Georgia's industrial centers and turned into a general strike of the workers of the Southern Caucasus. The uprising of Khashuri railway workers resulted in many casualties, and this caused fresh disturbances of workers in Chiatura, Samtredia, Poti and Batumi. Solidarity, alongside the political character of demonstrations, was becoming a distinct feature of the workers' movement.

The government of the Caucasus tried to improve the situation by means of reprisals, though its acuteness made it necessary to take the workers' demands into consideration.

The workers' movement revealed many workers having the traits of a leader, viz. Z. Chodrishvili, M. Bochoridze, V. Sturua, S. Aliluyev etc. Social-democratic organizations and their leaders played an important part in developing political consciousness of Georgia's working-class and rallying them for struggle (the leaders were as follows: I. Jugashvili,



K. Chkheidze, I. Ramishvili, V. Ketskhoveli and A. Tsulukidze). These leaders turned the discontent of workers, caused by everyday problems, into a powerful social force and opposed it to autocracy.

Agrarian movement

Workers' strikes were supported by the agrarian movement as well. There were many reasons for peasants' discontent in villages. Among them the most important were national oppression, social injustice, lack of lands and high taxes.

The peasantry reform did not eradicate the remnants of serfdom. Peasants, having temporary obligations, remained tied by the taxes that they had had to pay before the reform. Only after they had managed to buy out the allotment of land they were free from paying them. The leaseholders and a great part of migrant peasantry were practically in the same condition. The exploitation of landlords was aggravated by the appearance of rich peasants (so called "Kulaks") who sometimes also oppressed their former brothers.

The peasantry opposed all this in their own way: they refused to pay labor constriction and quitrent, destroyed the nobility's households, killed oppressors. The social form of protest such as robbery and brigandage spread widely. Armed peasants, hiding in forests, individually or acting in groups, resorted to terror against hateful landlords or officials. The outlaws – the Dvalishvili, D. Shervardnadze, S. Darchia, and S. Dolidze terrified the oppressors of the poor in the whole Imereti and Guria.

The protest movement of peasants acquired a mass character at the beginning of the 20th century, the struggle was more organized. The workers, driven out of towns for having taken part in demonstrations became agitators and propagandists in villages. It is true, that the Georgian workers still had a peasant's psychology, but it is a fact that they brought revolutionary tendencies to villages. The workers that had "town experience" called the peasants to rally and fight against autocracy.

The political activity of workers found a proper response among peasants. The economic interests of Georgian peasants and workers did not strongly oppose one another, and the national and social character of both against the common colonial yoke gave an additional stimulus to the union of these two social forces.

The agrarian movement found a new supporter and leader in social-democratic organizations. The social-democrats wanted to give a political character to the peasants' movement, and to turn it against the existing system.

In this respect mainly the peasantry of Western Georgia was distinguished, viz. the movement of Guria's peasants. The peasantry opposed social injustice by the new tactics of struggle, strike and boycott.*

In the spring of 1902 an argument started between the landlord Machutadze and some peasants, concerning pastures which turned into serious disturbances. These uprisings were joined by other villages as well. The peasants adopted resolutions about diminishing the quitrent and the price of lease, the free use of woods and pastures, stopping the licentious behavior of local officials, annulling church taxes, etc.

* The writer Chabua Amirejibi presented a generalized character of an avenging Georgian outlaw, fighting against the tyrant empire and its injustice in his well-known novel "Data Tutashkhia."



The movement spread fast. Soon all the peasants of Guria went on strike. Peasants refused to cultivate the landlords' lands until their demands were satisfied. The slogan was as follows, "Government, landlords, clerics are under boycott". It united all the strikers. The peasants refused to pay taxes to landowners and church, did not take plots of land on lease, did not greet their former landlords, did not obey the government officials and only carried out the orders of the leaders, chosen by them. The peasants formed 400-500-men units to defend themselves from expected reprisals.

The authorities of the region and police-officers did their best to improve the situation, but all in vain. Prince Gurieli asked Kutaisi Governor to send military forces to help them. The peasants did not forgive the prince his treachery and killed him.

The authorities of the province tried to settle things peacefully, but the insurgent peasants put up a strong resistance. The viceroy of the Caucasus ordered to send the army detachments to Guria. Martial law was declared. Punitive detachments were stationed in villages. Guria turned into the arena of Cossacks' raids. Severe reprisals lasted for six months. 250 peasants were arrested and exiled to Siberia. Disturbances ceased temporarily, but the spirit of resistance was still active. The organized rebellion of Gurian peasants drew the public attention abroad as well.

There were quite a few revolts on the agrarian basis in Imereti and Samegrelo too. The peasants had clashes with the police and landowners in their fight for their rights pretty often.

Disturbances in Racha were directed more against the government. The peasants demanded political rights and on May-Day demonstrations marched with red banners.

The agrarian movement spread on a large scale in Kartli in 1902-1903. The peasant population of the village of Karaleti in Gori Province opposed the landowner Eristavi; in the village of Mereti the peasants rose against the reactionary prince Amilakhvari. G. Amilakhvari surrounded his palace with a high stone wall and hired special detachments of Kists (Chechens), Lezghins, Ossets, etc. to subdue the recalcitrant peasants.

The agrarian movement in 1900-1904 had mainly economic demands, but the scale of the movement made it obvious that the struggle would not end there. It was clear that the Georgian peasantry would rally more closely to gain land and freedom..

Georgian population's discontent with the policy of the Tsarist government, directed against people, was proved by the refusal of those, called up for military service, to do it. This protest became more serious when the Russo-Japanese war broke out in 1904. The bloody war, started for gaining the domination in the Far East and the Pacific Ocean, was not popular even in the metropolis. The essence and purpose of the war was obscure to the officers and soldiers, especially to Georgians. They did not have anything to fight for with the Japanese.

The anti-war movement embraced the ranks of the democratic intelligentsia and students, as well as those of workers and peasants. On January 28th, 1904 the students of Kutaisi classical gymnasium did not allow the administration to acquaint them with the "Manifesto" about the declaration of the war. The same thing happened in the Technical High School. Several political anti-war demonstrations of students were organized in Kutaisi streets in February. Similar demonstrations took place in Tbilisi, Batumi and other towns.



The war turned out to be a serious trial for the Russian Empire. The defeat on the sea and land deepened the destabilization inside the country. The military failure drew the political crisis nearer.

Georgia in the Period of 1905-1907 Revolution

In January 1905 Russia was swept by a wave of revolutionary actions. The stormy Echo of St. Petersburg's "bloody Sunday" reached the colonial provinces of the Empire, among them Georgia too. More reasons for general disturbances had gathered there than in the Metropolis itself. The despotism of the autocracy, cruel national or social oppression, the disorderly agrarian problem, complete absence of civil rights were the preconditions that caused the 1905-1907 revolution.

The revolution broke out in the whole Empire with the purpose of doing away with the social oppression. The fight against tsarism in Georgia went on mainly with this purpose, but the colonial status of the country added another characteristic to the people's movement: national interests of politically oppressed Georgia were clearly seen in the process of the revolution.

The whole Georgia suffered from the national absence of rights, as for the social-absence of rights-only part of its population did. When this part of the population – workers, peasants, and democratic intelligentsia took up arms, they did not fight against the autocracy only for social inequality, but also for national oppression. Georgia's main national aim was still doing away with the colonial regime and the political independence of the country. In the opinion of patriot public figures, it was necessary to form a united front against the tsarism to achieve this aim, that all classes should be united in this fight. But it happened so that this spontaneous movement "punished everybody". The revolution took a different direction, it harmed the interests of the nation, classes rose against one another and this opposition turned into a civil war. Georgian workers and peasants rose against the local aristocracy and bourgeoisie. "We started fighting against one another and left our cart halfway. We did not manage to bring it home", Vazha-Pshavela wrote with chagrin.

The elderly generation of the Tergdaleulni thought that the people's revolutionary uprising against the autocracy was Georgia's awakening, the beginning of the national revival. "I was looking forward to it, it has happened! ... I am laughing, I am not crying any more!" (Interlineal translation), Akaki Tsereteli appealed to young people to make courageous steps. The enraptured poet who sang to brotherhood, unity, love translated "International" into Georgian in those days, but seeing that the revolution took a different turn he advised his people not to resort to violence against the Georgian aristocracy for "it was first necessary to repulse the external enemy and then fight inside the country jointly".

Ilia Chavchavadze also pointed to this: "One should turn today's movement in the proper direction; we should not attack one another and destroy our fortress from inside".

The voice of Ilia Chavchavadze and his companions-in-arms was subdued by social-democrats that were great in number. The revolution was led by this force, not by the Tergdaleulni.

The masses were now rallied round the red flag and the slogans of the social-democrats, and not round the standard of the Tergdaleulni.



The shooting of the peaceful demonstration in the capital of Russia on January 9th 1905 enraged the whole Empire. Georgia also responded to the massacre of unarmed workers. On January 18 the workers of the main shops of the railway abandoned their lathes and went on political strike. The next day the workers and employees of other enterprises joined the strike. The printing-houses closed. Studies were stopped in educational institutions. People flooded the streets. Protest meetings and rallies were organized. A demonstration of people was organized in Golovin (now Rustaveli) Avenue; they carried placards and slogans, "Down with the bloody autocracy!" "Long live the revolution!" The government ordered the police and soldiers to disperse the participants of the demonstration. Several policemen and participants of the demonstration were wounded in clashes. Forty people were arrested.

The strike lasted a week. Students took an active part in the strike alongside the workers in Kutaisi.

The strike, begun in Tbilisi, was joined by the workers of factories and plants, artisans, students of gymnasiums and seminaries of Batumi, Poti, Tqibuli, Sukhumi, Chiatara, Qvirila (Zestaphoni), Gori, Khashuri, etc. The workers were not satisfied with the consent of the administration to settle economic problems, and made political demands.

Disturbances were spread among the intelligentsia, students and schoolchildren of senior grades. Lessons were often missed, the students started to publish revolutionary newspapers and magazines. "We wrote leaflets as if they were essays for school", one of the contemporaries recalled. The government made reprisals harsher, but it became more and more difficult for the authorities to control the situation.

Peasants also became active from the very outset of the revolution. Social-democratic organizations aggravated the situation with their agitation and propaganda. The revolutionary movement was given the name of "Unity". Propagandist-revolutionaries were called "men of Unity". "Unity" was the topic everybody spoke about. Everybody was to join it and take an oath of loyalty. "The Unity", surrounded with a certain halo, was a symbol of honesty, valor, fight against the social injustice, though it had quite a few negative features as well. Very often innocent people became victims of the "Unity", while certain circles of society felt genuine sympathy for this movement; others were compelled to have something to do with it due to the atmosphere of fear spread among the population. "Those who were against the "Unity" were relentlessly persecuted", writer David Kldiashvili writes.

And indeed, the terrorists of the "Unity" did not spare anybody and killed enemies or friends if they suspected them of anything. The political parties of socialist orientation condemned terror officially, they rejected using terror by means of various resolutions, but in reality they made wide use of it. Scores of police-officers of various ranks, officials of the tsarist government of higher rank, representatives of aristocracy fell victims of terror. The tactics of struggle of political parties planned attacks at state establishments (post, exchequer) or wealthy landowners and capitalists, aimed at getting hold of their property. This event, called expropriation which the Bolsheviks' leader V. Lenin considered to be "taking away of what was amassed by robbery" was enjoyed by him immensely.

Two kinds of violence opposed one another during the revolution: 1. the violence coming from the camp of the revolutionaries and 2. that coming from the state. Quite often the radical forces caused a conflict with the governmental bodies artificially,



Gori tavads Amilakhvari and Abdushelishvili aided the Caucasian administration in subduing peasants' disturbances. Their 700-men "druzhina" (detachment), armed to the teeth, which people called "the black detachment", sacked villages, attacked, robbed and raided the families of recalcitrant peasants.

Cossacks and policemen, sent to villages by the government, acted more cruelly. The persecution of revolutionaries, their arrest, hanging or exile was an ordinary happening. Encouraged by the local administration, a bloody clash of Armenians and Azerbaijani took place in Baku. A similar massacre, on ethnic and religious basis was planned to be provoked in Tbilisi too, but the Georgian public figures, leaders of political organizations and the workers of the capital managed to evade this large-scale tragedy.

Revolutionary activities did not abate. People did not intend to surrender, they did not agree to a compromise either. They resisted the forces of the government. Armed peasants started fighting against a mounted Cossack squadron at the village of Nasakirali. Worker and peasant detachments attacked trains at railway junctions and set political prisoners free. Shorapani, Racha, Lechkhumi, Zugdidi and Ozurgeti districts were governed by peasants' revolutionary committees. The streets of Kutaisi, Poti and Batumi were full of barricades. Peasants' red detachments, acting in Kartli and Kakheti, struck terror on the local administration. These detachments bore the name of "forest brothers".

Workers' demonstrations, begun in Moscow in October of 1905, turned into a general political strike. The strike was joined by the industrial enterprises of Georgia – railway, printing houses, educational and trade establishments. All the regions of Georgia were aflame with peasants' rebellions.

Such a development of the revolutionary movement throughout the whole Empire compelled the Tsarism to make certain concessions. On October 17, 1905 the manifesto of Nicolas II "On 'perfecting the state order'" was published. It tallowed a number of democratic liberties, among them: personal immunity, freedom of word, press, unions, religion, etc. It was announced that a representative body of Russia would be convened – a state council that would have legislative rights. Electorate was considerably enlarged; workers and peasants were also given the right to take part in elections.

This reform, unheard of before under the conditions of autocracy, changed the grounds of the state system of the Empire; Russia was on the way to constitutional monarchy.

And the main demand of the revolution was this. It was its essence. The country adopted a democratic legislative structure. It was considered to be a guarantee of the forthcoming reforms. Hoping that peaceful changes would follow the moderate part of society-liberal bourgeoisie, democratic intelligentsia and others moved away from the revolution. The same mood was noticed among the masses as well. In spite of this, radical forces, mainly the Bolsheviks, whose principle was "either everything or nothing", were not satisfied with what they had achieved and started aggravating the situation. The Leninist wing of the RSDWP overestimated the possibilities of proletariat; they did not take into consideration what would follow their decision and made overthrowing the tsar's power their aim. This choice was not adequate of the created situation, but the Bolsheviks followed this way consciously. They arranged an armed uprising of workers in Moscow in December 1905. The government quelled the rebellion that had no support, in other regions of the country.



Georgian Bolsheviks, followers of Lenin, tried to organize a rebellion in Tbilisi as well; they brought workers' armed detachments out into the streets of Nadzaladevi and Didube, they even occupied these districts for some time, but were unable to put up proper resistance to the detachments of the police and army. The army surrounded the rebels, used artillery and opened fire against the rebellious districts.

There were local demonstrations in other regions of Georgia as well. The insurgents had even occupied the main railway line from Tsipa Tunnel to Batumi for some days. In Zestaphoni the red army men disarmed two squadrons of Tengin regiment. Certain success was also achieved by the armed workers of Gori, Dusheti, Racha and Lechkhumi Regions, but the fight lacked former mass character and organization, and was, therefore, doomed to defeat.

The defeat of the armed rebellion decided the fate of the revolution as well. It is true, that the workers' and peasants' disturbances did not come to an end suddenly, but the people's movement began to go downwards.

During the revolution the position of political parties, organization and their fighting efficiency was of great importance.

RSDWP, divided into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, suffered from interparty disagreement, but it was the most numerous organization and retained influence on the masses more than any other organization.

In 1905-1907 three party congresses and one conference were held. Different approaches to the prospects of the revolution of the factions appeared during the heated argument, though the representatives of both trends organized strike bureaus, peasants' revolutionary committees, etc. together.

Georgian Social-Democrats rallied revolutionary forces with the slogans of class-struggle. National nihilism was a characteristic feature of both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. They widely used Utopian promises and demagoguery. They fed people on the hopes of changing the existing system and establishing socialism. They did not promise them national freedom. The Bolsheviks hastened to reach their aim by means of using violence, while the Mensheviks, alongside the armed uprising, also saw peaceful possibilities. The Bolsheviks declared boycott to the first State Council. As for the Mensheviks, they took part in the elections and opposed the Tsar's government from the tribune of the Parliament.

Georgian Social-Democrats took an active part in the revolution. They were mostly on the side of the Bolsheviks. They had their armed detachments, but they mostly distinguished themselves by political terror (the assault on Tbilisi Police officer Martinov, etc.).

Georgia's Socialist-Federalist party was in the vanguard of the struggle for social and national freedom. This national-political party, consisting of intellectuals, initiated quite a bold action in the autumn of 1905. Asked by the Party, one of the leaders of the Federalists Giorgi Dekanozishvili bought 7000 guns abroad, freighted a Dutch ship and brought the arms illegally to his country. The ship, called "Sirius" was navigated by the crew, consisting of French and Dutch anarchists, commanded by Christian Cornelissen. True, part of the foreign-made guns, unloaded in Poti, fell into the hands of the police, but the rest of them were distributed among the revolutionary-minded population.

Attacking the bulwark of autocracy, the party of Federalists requested political autonomy for Georgia and intended to integrate her into renewed Russia on federative basis.



The public figures of the national-democratic trend supported the idea of Georgia's freedom, the restoring of her statehood in the form of a wide self-government and national-territorial autonomy. Giorgi Gvazava had even worked out the status of Georgia's autonomy with concrete meaning. The national-democrats based the demand of autonomy on the historic rights of the Georgian nation and tried to achieve their goal by using the international law.

The failure of the revolution frustrated the plans of the Georgian political parties. Their offensive tactics was substituted by defensive struggle.

The Georgian peasantry had not given up fighting at once either, disturbances lasted for quite a long time, but the government was getting back the lost positions very fast and was preparing for revenge.

The government became more ruthless and implacable in taking revenge on opposing forces. The civil rights given to people according to the 17th October Manifesto were restricted, strikes were prohibited, the rights of the press became limited, and the gendarmerie, okhranka and other bodies of the police were strengthened.

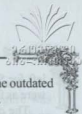
The victorious autocracy punished the peoples of peripheries and non-Russians with particular relentlessness. Alikhanov-Avarski, given carte blanche of actions in Western Georgia burnt down part of Zestaphoni, Kharagauli, and Kutaisi. Fire raged in many villages of Guria for several days. Houses of the participants of the revolution were burnt down to ashes, economy was destroyed. Prisons were full of political prisoners. Rebels were dismissed from factories. Peasants were forced to pay for the damages inflicted on the Exchequer and landlords.

The leaders of anti-regime disturbances were either executed or exiled to Siberia. Several thousands of people were deported to Russia's remote regions or were convicted. "In the epoch of suppressing the revolution Georgia was devastated to such a degree that one would think she had been invaded by an enemy", Ivane Javakhishvili wrote.

The information about the tragic reality in Georgia was published both in the European and USA press ("Chicago Daily News", "Daily Chronicle", "Harper's Magazine", etc.). The progressive public of France, England and Switzerland expressed their sympathy for the Georgian people at their meetings. Villar, the correspondent of the newspaper "Times" arrived in Georgia to get acquainted with the situation and having returned to his country, he published a book under the title of "Fire and Sword in the Caucasus". Foreign journalists – Dorland, Brown, Nevinson described the ruthlessness of punitive detachments in Georgia and acquainted the world with numerous facts of barbarity of the Russian administration. The above-mentioned authors pointed out that the population of burnt down villages behaved with dignity. They wrote that they had not heard weeping, groans or complaints anywhere. "As though we stood facing the army that had fought in a fierce battle and was getting ready for a new attack".

And, indeed, in spite of defeat, Georgia's revolutionary forces had not been dispersed chaotically, they retreated fighting. Guerilla actions were still going on in many places, they killed general Gryaznov, the organizer of punitive expeditions, the hangman Alikhanov-Avarski and others.

The 1905-1907 revolution revealed all the social and national fallaciousness, existing in the autocratic empire, exposed all the contradictions between the people and the government, colonies and metropolis, accumulated among the social strata of separate



nations which made a normal coexistence impossible. The masses had opposed the outdated political system, but the tsar's government won a victory in this unequal fight.

The Question of Georgia in Russia and Europe

The question of Georgia in Russia's State Council (Duma)

The People's revolution having been defeated, a period of "order and reforms" began in Russia. The creator and organizer of the new course of the Government was A. Stolypin, President of the Council of Ministers.

The reforms, carried out in the central provinces (gubernias) of the country, were not realized in Georgia at all; as for the "order" of the reformer Prime-Minister, expressed in establishing political reaction in the whole Empire, was most of all felt in the peripheries. Georgia and the Georgian people were specially punished for the participation in revolutionary disturbances. Court-martials, gallows, incessant executions became a symbol of post-revolutionary Georgia. The tsarism increased the demographic expansion too. The Caucasian administration gave the best lands of the Black Sea littoral to Russian settlers. The government still continued the policy of opposing the local nations to one another, encouraged clashes on ethnic and religious basis, etc.

To be saved from all this, to maintain their own identity, to gain freedom, the Georgian people needed steadfast national unity inside the country, and the support of the educated mankind, the disposing of the progressive public opinion in their favor outside the country. It was necessary to make Russia's political and intellectual circles and the progressive public of the West take an interest in the Georgian question. The Russian State Council (Duma) presented additional opportunities in this respect.

A considerable part of the Georgian society approved of the idea of settling up a new representative council in spite of the fact that the council did not fully satisfy their constitutional aspirations, and started getting ready for the elections. "We must become members of the State State Council; we must register the whole reality. These authentic facts will reach everybody's ears from there, and the whole Europe will raise its voice". "We need men who must inform the best part of the whole Russia of our present situation, and even Europe. Who will be able to do it so well, with such authority as future deputies?" – the Georgian press of those days wrote.

Many Georgian public figures considered the Council to be the arena of strengthening one's rights. "The parliament tribune is the best place to produce a juridical document", said Archil Jorjadze, but the matter was that this tribune was still inaccessible for Georgia and other peoples of the Region.

It can be said that the Caucasus obtained the right of being elected deputies by taking it from the Imperial government by force. Neither the manifesto of October 17, 1905 nor the regulations of the elections of the deliberative council, published in December of the same year, envisaged the participation of the local deputies in the future legislative body. Having the consent of the viceroy of the Caucasus, a delegation of the Caucasian nations



left for St. Petersburg to settle this problem. The Georgian members of the delegation were as follows: Ilia Chavchavadze, Niko Nikoladze and Giorgi Zhuruli.

The question was being discussed in the Supreme Committee of the State Council. The members of the Committee were in two minds whether to permit the Caucasians to elect deputies or not, as a revolutionary revolt was still going on there. Ilia Chavchavadze categorically requested that the Caucasus should take part in the formation of the legislative body of the Empire. He said that if it did not happen their people would not bear the new insult and the government would be compelled to shed a lot of blood of their soldiers in the struggle against the indignant population of the Caucasus.

The efforts of the delegation were effective. The Caucasus was allowed to take part in the elections to the deliberative council.

The elections of the first State Council were held in Georgia in April-May of 1906, later than in other parts of Russia. The whole territory of the Caucasian viceroy had thirty mandates. Among them the Tbilisi Province had four, the Kutaisi Province had three, Sukhumi, Batumi and Artvini Districts were to elect one deputy. While voting, the Georgian Social-Democrats turned out to be successful. Of eight deputies, elected in Georgia, five – N. Zhorandia, I. Ramishvili, I. Gomarteli, S. Japaridze, S. Tsereteli, - were members of their organization. I. Baratashvili got his mandate by the list of Social-Federalists; as for the retired General P. Shervashidze, he was not a member of any party.

The Georgian deputies did not have to work in the first deliberative council for a long time. On July 9th, 1906 Emperor Nicholas II dismissed the representatives of people and appointed elections of a new State Council. All the deputies, sent from Georgia did not even have time to speak in the palace of Tavrida. Those who were able to ascend the tribune were remembered by their radical statements. Noe Zhordania was elected chairman of the Social-Democratic faction.

The voice of the Georgian nation did not reach the first deliberative council as they would have liked it. It was not the aim of the Social-Democrats. It is true that I. Gomarteli exposed the despotism of the autocracy, he called the Tsar's government hangmen for raiding and sacking the people, etc., but that was the only thing that was done, it did not have any development.

It was Ioseb Baratashvili who took upon himself a burden of representing Georgia in the supreme legislative body of the Empire. He informed the deputies of the unbearable situation in his country in his very first speech, he gave examples and concrete facts of this to prove his point, he condemned the harsh licentious behavior of the officials of the Caucasian administration and punitive expeditions, and appealed to the members of the Council to raise their voices against the anti-people policy of the government. In spite of this, neither Baratashvili was able to express the political will of Georgia and to demand national freedom. What the elected deputies were unable to do was done by the Georgian scholars – A. Tsagareli, Iv. Javakhishvili and Z. Avalishvili, working in St. Petersburg at that time. By warrant of the nobility and other national-political forces they turned to the Polish autonomist deputy – Lednitski with a request that the latter should protect Georgia's right to the national-territorial autonomy.

Lednitski fulfilled the request and handed in an official application on this subject to the Council on behalf of "The Autonomists' Union".



Ilia Chavchavadze made a distinct declaration of Georgia's national aspirations for the Russia's public to hear. In April of 1906 the well-known Georgian public figure was elected deputy to the State Council of the Empire. St. Petersburg newspapers took an interview from him on this occasion. Ilia told the journalists that he was a supporter of Georgia's self-government with a local legislative government; he also added that this idea was supported by the Georgian people. "[I] will protect the interests of the whole Georgia and all the Georgian people in the State Council, not the interests of some particular class", said the writer in conclusion.

Chavchavadze was preparing a report concerning the autocephaly of the Georgian Church to present it to Russia's State Council, but he was not destined to do it. On August 30, 1907 the great teacher of the nation was assassinated.

The restoration of the autocephaly of the church was part of the struggle for the Georgian issue, in general, i.e. the struggle for the national-political liberation of Georgia. Both the Georgian clergy and secular public figures considered it to be of great importance. The problem of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church became very acute. Different works were published in which the role of the Georgian Church in the life of the Georgian people, their spiritual development was shown, in which the right of the Georgian Church to autocephaly was substantiated, etc. The demand of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church was made several times before the supreme power of the Empire.

This legitimate request of the Georgian people had a resonance in Russia's clerical and scientific circles.

The ecclesiastic N. Durnovo, well-known historians V. Solovyov, M. Pokrovski and others publicly supported the restoration of the Georgian church in its rights.

Nicholas II convened a meeting preliminary to the Synod (a preliminary Church Council). Georgian bishops, Kirion and Leonide, Professors A.I. Tsagareli, A.I. Khakhanashvili, N. Marr spoke at the meeting. They depicted a deplorable situation of Georgia's Orthodox Christian Church and the believing Georgian people in the times after the autocephaly had been abolished, they requested that autocephaly should be restored. Their request was based on canonical and other rights.

The opponents, expressing the interests of the autocracy, declared the demand of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church to be a political separatism, and accused the supporters of this request of being revolutionaries. The meeting broke up. The problem was not solved.

The fighters for the autocephaly of the Georgian Church turned to the Constantinople Patriarch and even the Roman Pope to help them in their struggle, but in vain.

The government began persecuting the supporters of the autocephaly. Bishop Kirion was particularly oppressed. He was disrobed and exiled to Russia. Being placed in one of the monasteries, he was watched by the police. In spite of the reprisals, the progressive Georgian clerics did not stop fighting; the fight for spiritual freedom went on, alongside the movement for acquiring Georgia's national rights both inside the country and beyond her boundaries.

The Georgian deputation in the 2nd State Deliberative Council of Russia was represented by Social-Democrats (Mensheviks). They did not try to put the national question forward,



but their speeches, exposing the despotism of the autocracy, and the deputies' thorny questions drew the attention of the Council, government and the wide circles of society to Georgia's problems too. The Georgian deputies were often driven out of the assembly-hall for this, they were even arrested and convicted.

The situation in the Caucasus became the subject of long debates in the 3-rd State Council, acting in 1907-1912. The representatives of the reactionary wing of the Council accused the whole administration of the Caucasus, the viceroy personally, of a liberal policy. As if I. Vorontsov-Dashkov did not properly protect the interests of the Russian population of the Region, and were tolerant of the separatism of the indigenous population (the "Tuzemtsi") etc. All this was aimed at permitting the colonial government to act more freely against the recalcitrant "inorodtsi" (people of a different nationality). The Georgian deputies K. Chkheidze and E. Gegechkori (both Social-Democrats, Mensheviks) exposed the real intentions of the authors of this accusation. Apart from this, they showed a real face of the Russian administration in the Caucasus, condemned the cruelty of the Russian autocracy and its servants that exceeded all possible norms.

Such an actual question for Georgia as the social and agrarian problem of land-tenure of migrants and the like were discussed in the Council for years. But a more essential political demand, concerning the whole Georgia, was heard from the tribune of the supreme legislative body of the Empire only on December 13, 1912. A Georgian deputy to the 4th State Council, Federalist Varlam Gelovani* raised a question of granting Georgia the status of a national-territorial autonomy. "Georgia is a country with her independent history, her culture, her language, her own way of life, her own social political aspiration and necessity", said Gelovani and concluded: "Russia did not turn out to be a protector of a not numerous Georgian people of the same religion, on the contrary, she turned out to be a conqueror, a sworn enemy. The whole population of Georgia is suffocated by the despotic regime and aspires for freedom. They do not expect anything good from the government. It expects honorable human rights from the Russian people, and the only means to achieve this is legalizing political autonomy for Georgia".

The aspiration of the nation, declared by V. Gelovani, was met with silence by the State Council. They did not even find it necessary to discuss it. In spite of all this, the demand of restoring the statehood of Georgia, even in the form of autonomy, which was declared for the Empire to hear, was the fact of historical importance.

The Georgian issue in Europe

The public in the West for a long time did not know anything about the national problems of the Georgian people that had missed the natural way of development due to historical cataclysms and had become part of the Russian Empire from the beginning of the 19th century. European travelers, writers and other people who had arrived in Georgia with a special purpose or found themselves there in passing, saw it as an exotic region. They would remember its historic and cultural past superficially, but would not

* Apart from him, there were two more representatives of Georgia in the 4th State Council Social-Democrats (Mensheviks) K. Chkheidze and A. Chkhenkeli.



write anything about the unbearable life that this people and country deprived of their freedom, led.

The well-known French Kartvelologist Marie-Felicite Brosset played an important part in making the scholarly circles of Europe take an interest in Georgia. The activities of some Georgian and foreign public figures (Marjorie and Oliver Wardrops, Baron de Bai, Artur Leist) to make the cultural heritage of Georgia widely known abroad are noteworthy, but Georgia as a political subject did not attract the attention of Western states.

In this respect a serious attempt was made by founding the newspaper "Sakartvelo" and its French addition "La Georgie". The above-mentioned publications informed Europe about the aspiration of the Georgian people to regain their national liberty and to restore their statehood. The liberal press of Europe and many social and political public figures responded to the Georgians' aspiration with sympathy.

An English-Georgian committee whose members were Maurice, Cavendish, Draihort, Scott and others was established in London to oppose the violence and punitive measures carried out

by the government in Georgia during the first revolution. The Committee collected over 4000 English women's signatures and sent a protest to the government of Nicholas II, condemning the barbarity of his administration in Georgia. The protest was sent with the assistance of the Prime Minister.

The political action carried out by the Georgian social-political forces in 1907 whose leaders and organizers were Varlam Cherkezishvili, Mikheil Tsereteli and Giorgi Gvazava had a great response. A petition, called "The memorandum of Georgia's people", was compiled to be sent to the peace conference held in the Hague at that time. V. Cherkezishvili gave the memorandum, signed by several thousands of people, to Brussels University professor, member of the international tribunal, Ernest Niss to edit. And then he presented it to the English-Georgian Committee in London. The Committee printed the petition in the English and French languages, added a special address to it, and sent it to the members of the peace conference.

The petition informed the heads of the world states of the legal status of Georgia in the Russian Empire, described the unheard of persecution and oppression the Georgian people suffered from and added in conclusion: "Your support will help us to restore our rights according to the 1783 treaty which guarantees the integrity of our territory and our national autonomy".

The delegates of the conference got acquainted with the Memorandum, but as the agenda had been affirmed earlier, the Georgian issue was not a question of a special discussion. Gvazava specially arrived in the Hague, though having no official invitation, he was unable to attend the conference, and only had meetings with the representatives of oppressed peoples.

In spite of all this, Georgia's memorandum spread widely. The complete text of the petition was published in the press of Belgium, the USA and England. The information was published in the magazines and newspapers of Spain, Holland and other countries. "The educated mankind began to speak about Georgia", Varlam Cherkezishvili wrote.

The representatives of Georgia took part in the work of "oppressed nations" international congresses held in 1910, 1913 and 1916. It was due to V. Cherkezishvili's proposal that "The conference protecting oppressed nations and peoples", held in London



in 1910, entered an article into its resolution appealing to the International Tribunal to take into consideration the treaties, concluded by small and oppressed nations with large states. In 1916 Mikheil Tsereteli made an impressive speech in defence of the abused rights of the Georgian people at the meeting of this kind held in Lausanne.

Before World War I the attention of the wide circles of the Western public was attracted to the intention of the government of the Russian tsar to make a military firing ground in the middle of Kartli, in the fertile valley of the River Tiriphoni. To make a firing ground it would be necessary to deport several thousands of households from the intensively populated villages, situated around the valley, mainly the Georgian peasants.

Through Varlam Cherkezishvili's efforts the peace congress of the English public, held in Liverpool, adopted a resolution, especially concerning this question and condemned this evil idea of the autocracy. Besides the Russian government and the Caucasian administration, the resolution was sent to the press agencies of Europe and influential publications. The government had to give up the idea.

"A union of protecting the Georgian people's rights" functioned in London from 1912, its members were engaged in the propaganda of Georgia's historic rights in the countries of Europe. Their propaganda was based on the 1783 Georgievsk treaty. They also tried to interest great states in the Georgian issue.

The Georgians, living in Paris, supported by the French public figures, founded "A league protecting Georgia's rights" with the same purpose.

A group of Georgia's liberation, founded in Geneva as early as in 1910, also aimed at restoring the state independence of Georgia. Petre Surguladze was at the head of this group. The printed organ of the group "Tavisupali Sakartvelo" ("Free Georgia") was the first magazine published abroad. Its founders appealed to their fellow-countymen to fight for national consolidation, the freedom and independence of their country.

Very soon after World War I broke out this group became a committee of liberating Georgia and established close contacts with the military and diplomatic services of Germany. Assisted by these departments, the committee did great work to achieve the international recognition of the Georgian nation's rights. In 1915 the committee published an address to the educated mankind. This document, spread as a single sheet, was printed in the European magazines and newspapers in the French, German and English languages.

The address informed the progressive public of the Georgians' identity and described the danger that awaited this ancient Christian nation in the hands of the Russia's autocracy. Drawing the addressee's attention to the loud announcement made by big states at the very start of the war – "This war began on behalf of civilization, to protect small nations, worldwide justice, and general peace, etc." – the authors of the address hoped that the educated mankind would express their unbiassed verdict.

The representatives of the oppressed nations of the Romanovs' Empire founded "A league of Russia's alien nations" in Berlin in 1916. Its aim was propaganda against the tsarism. Georgians were also members of the newly established organization. This league was to show to the world that Russia was a barbarous country, not a law-governed state and that it presented danger to other countries' culture and freedom.

The league of the aliens sent a telegram to Woodrow Wilson, the USA President fighting for humanity and justice, and asked him to take the suffering of the enslaved nations of the Russian Empire, deprived of all civil rights, close to heart. The telegram was signed by fourteen people, among them the Georgian Mikheil Tsereteli. The League



tried to inform Russia's allies, member states of the Entente of their situation, with the assistance of the USA president, hoping that "the people loving freedom and justice would be found in France and England who would understand the unbearable conditions of the oppressed".

The above-mentioned address was published in full by a Swedish newspaper printed in Stockholm – "Dagens Nyheter," as for its summary it was spread by the Associated Press.

The telegram, sent to President Wilson by the League, caused an utterly negative reaction of Russia's official press and especially of the State Council, but the deputies A. Kerenski and A. Chkhenkeli declared that the address had a real foundation

On 22 June, 1917 a well-known manifesto of the USA president addressed to his senate was published. The manifesto presented the terms of the future peace-treaty and the strengthening the later peace, which rejected the difference between big and small, powerful and weak nations. It declared similar rights to be the basis of their equality.

The Georgian national public figures took advantage of this situation. The members of the committee of Georgia's Liberation – M. Tsereteli and G. Machabeli sent a telegram to the USA president on January 25, of the same year. The telegram said, "Mr. President, when the time of reforming the organization of the mankind, according to your ideas, comes, when the American people and their president will be given an important part at the coming congress of peace, do not forget Georgia then which has, at any rate, as much right to be independent or to have a full internal autonomy as any other unjustly oppressed nation".

On the initiative of Mikheil Tsereteli and Giorgi Machabeli a document "Georgia's rights to independence" was prepared and published in the French language in Switzerland in 1917. It is emphasized in the document that Georgia aspires to the independence of her state, and this is substantiated by her national, historic and natural rights from the point of view of the International Law. The principles on which the rights of Georgia's freedom and statehood are based in regard to Russia are also presented here. The document was addressed to "the educated mankind, European states and thinking Europeans". It ended with an appeal, "It's high time to stop being a heartless witness of the destruction of a cultured nation. To restore it is enough to acknowledge its doubtless and most sacred rights, for it to gain its political status and become a member of the family of independent nations".

The Georgian issue gradually found its place in the orbit of international politics due to prolonged efforts of Varlam Cherkezishvili, Mikheil Tsereteli, Giorgi Machabeli and other Georgian patriots.

Georgia in the Years of World War I

The leading countries of Europe were preparing for expanding their "living space" from as early as the beginning of the 20th century, and in reality for expanding their domains or spheres of influence. A certain coincidence of interests divided them into two military blocs: on one side the Entente (England, Russia, France), and on the other side the Alliance of Three (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey). Italy which at first had



been an ally of Germany, in 1915 joined the opposite party. Later on the USA took part in the war on the side of the Entente.

The military operations started at the beginning of August, in 1914. Russia deployed her troops on the only western front at first. She even moved two army corps and five divisions of the Cossacks from the Southern Caucasus. The tsar's government tried to avoid opening the Caucasian front through negotiations with Constantinople, even after the beginning of the war, but in vain.

In 1914 at the end of October the Turkish warship opened fire at Russia's ships, bombed the cities of Odessa, Sabastopol and Novorossiisk.

On November 2 Russia declared war on Ottoman Turkey. Georgia became a frontline zone.

Germanophile aspiration was noticed among the Georgian political elite and intellectuals before the war. In spite of this, certain strata of the Georgian society shared the patriotic feelings of Russians eager to defend their country and expressed their loyalty by manifestations and addresses sent to the Emperor. The Georgian bourgeoisie, nobility and merchants' guilds allocated large sums of money to the needs of the war.

The pan-Turkish plan of the ruling circles of the Ottoman Empire set the task of conquering the Caucasus. Their commanders collected a considerable number of troops for this purpose. The third army of the Turks, located in the Caucasus, consisted of 180000 men.

The Russian Caucasian army was also supplemented by reservists. Their task was to defend the railway lines, the Georgian Military Highway, the industrial enterprises of Baku, alongside other military tasks.

The Turks were the first to launch an offensive on the Caucasian front. Their detachments even invaded Batumi Black Sea Coast, but they were crushingly defeated in the well-known Sariqamish battle in December and were compelled to change their tactics and defend themselves.

Russia's success in the Caucasus and Asia Minor was followed by "the great retreat" on the western front which resulted in giving up Poland, Western Ukraine, Byelorussia and part of Lithuania. The warfare developed a stabilized and procrastinated character.

Russia turned out to be unprepared for such a long and large-scale war. That Russia was a technically backward country became evident on the fronts. Bad organization, lack of armament and qualified commanders was revealed. The situation in the rear was also bad. The initial patriotic outburst of masses was changed by apathy and the anti-war feeling.

The hardships caused by the war were felt in Georgia as well. Over two hundred thousand men were called up from Georgia to take part in the war. This was the healthiest and most able-bodied part of the population. They shed blood far from their homes to satisfy the ambitious interests of the Russian Empire. The removal of such a quantity of people capable of work from peaceful life caused lack of manpower in every branch of economy. The war destroyed the country's economics which was deficient as it was. Scores of enterprises closed, others managed to work, but with little efficiency due to lack of fuel or raw materials. The work in Batumi oil-processing plant came to a standstill; the export of Chiatura manganese stopped, the mining of the copper ore, coal, barytes was reduced. The productivity of labor dropped considerably. Unemployment increased.



The railway could not meet the demands of the army and the population simultaneously, the goods turnover was hindered, and the transport did not work. The trade and economic relations with the regions of the Empire became weaker, the roads, connecting Georgia with foreign markets, were closed, trade slackened, foreign trade came to a standstill.

The intensive branches of Georgia's agriculture were greatly damaged during the war years. The area of crops diminished, the crops were reduced, the viticulture was on the verge of destruction, and the same fate awaited silkworm breeding, tobacco-cultivation, and cotton-growing. The quantity of domestic animals and birds decreased. The financial position of the population became worse. The living conditions grew hard. Poverty and famine spread wide in villages.

The so called food riots became frequent in towns due to the unheard of speculation under the conditions of lack of bread and other food products. The palliative measures of the government were unable to improve the situation. The administration managed to establish order only by means of extreme steps, using the police and the armed detachments of Cossacks.

The government did not take into consideration the people's conditions, they permanently increased state taxes when the income of the peasantry decreased every year; as for the nominal salaries of workers and employees they were increased insignificantly.

The failure of military operations, the destruction of economy, and the growing discontent of workers created favorable conditions for spreading a revolutionary movement through the Empire.

Various political organizations, proceeding from their interests, tried to take advantage of the created situation. The Bolsheviks decided to turn the world war into a civil war and to overthrow the autocracy in this way. This extraordinary idea belonged to Lenin. The Georgian Bolsheviks were steady followers of this idea of Lenin, they propagandized it, but their influence on the population was insignificant.

The Social-Democrats (Mensheviks) who expressed the aspiration of broad masses did not share this point of view. The Social-Democratic faction in the State Deliberative Council supported the idea of giving credits for the necessities of war. Some Mensheviks preferred to support the policy of neutrality, though they did not avoid condemning the predatory character of the war.

The Social-Democrats were in opposition to the government, exposed its imperialistic policy, but did not plan to overthrow it.

The party of Social-Federalists remained faithful to their national ideal – Georgia's autonomy during the war years too. The leaders of the organization hoped that the world war would become national in character, big empires would be destroyed and the oppressed nations would gain freedom. The Federalists were convinced that the defeat of Russia would facilitate the liberation of the nations in the peripheries, their self-determination in the form of autonomy or sovereign statehood. A certain part of the members of the political organization was of pro-German orientation, but avoided revealing and expressing it publicly. The leaders of the party did not exclude the possibility of Russia's reformation on the basis of democracy after the war, therefore they restrained themselves from taking radical steps and preferred to act according to the created military-political situation.

The war made significant corrections in the plans of action of the Georgian National-Democrats. Foreseeing the expected changes in the international situation, the National-



Democrats worked out two different ways of fighting for Georgia's independence. The first one was to be used in case Russia and the countries of the Entente won the war, and the other – if Germany and the bloc of the Central European countries won a victory. The first one envisaged secret, cautious and moderate actions. This line of action was realized by the public figures united around national-democratic newspapers and "The Georgian Charity Society" in their home country.

The Charity Society was a legal organization which, according to its regulations, was to help prisoners of war, the wounded and other fellow-countrymen being in danger, and secretly it was a leader of the nation's social and ideological life. This circle, of national and democratic trend did not reveal any signs of separatism and they only wanted a national autonomy for Georgia.

But open and obvious were the activities of the committee of Georgia's liberation, established abroad, which made a decision to have an ally in fighting for Georgia's liberation abroad and chose Germany for that purpose.

The liberation Committee was founded in the autumn of 1914 on the basis of the Georgia's Liberation Group that had existed in Geneva before that time. The committee was headed by Petre Surguladze. The members were Nestor Magalashvili, brothers Leo and Giorgi Kereselidzes, Giorgi Machabeli, Mikheil Tsereteli, Shalva Vardidze, Zia Abashidze and others.

The official representatives of Germany accepted the Georgians' proposal and promised to support the Committee. Soon an agreement was also concluded between the Liberation Committee and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany. According to the document, if the Alliance of Three won the war, and if Georgia had an opportunity of declaring independence, Germany was to recognize her sovereignty and assist her being internationally acknowledged.

The governmental circles of Germany took an interest in Giorgi Machabeli's another idea too. His suggestion was a restoration of monarchy in Georgia and raising to the throne one of the heirs of Wilhelm II. The prince would marry a Georgian girl, and in this way a new dynasty would be founded.

The Liberation Committee concluded a written agreement with the governments of Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. The question of frontiers was concretized with the latter. The Ottoman Turkey was to recognize the newly founded Georgian State and its right to its historic and real territory. The frontier between Turkey and Georgia was to be the frontier that had existed before the 1914 Russo-Turkish war.

The Liberation Committee was allowed to form a Georgian military detachment on the territory of Turkey, but in return it was to engage in the propaganda in favor of Turkey in Georgia and arrange an anti-Russian rebellion.

The national aspiration of the Liberation Committee corresponded with the Keizer's military-political interests in regard to Russia, therefore all the activities of the Committee were financed by Germany. It was also with the financial assistance of Germany that a Georgian military battalion was formed in Turkey, called "the Georgian Legion". It was recruited by Georgian Moslems and the Georgians, former prisoners of war.

The members of the Committee got into contact with Georgia from Istanbul by means of German submarines; they organized several expeditions and even managed to bring arms into the country. Giorgi Machabeli came to Georgia illegally quite a number of times



and established relationship with the Georgian social and political forces. A branch of the Liberation Committee was set up in Tbilisi whose members were David Vachnadze, Spiridon Kedia and Revaz Gabashvili. The Liberation Committee was in contact with the Georgians, studying in Russia's university towns and the eminent representatives of the Petrograd Georgian colony (scholars Alexandre Tsagareli, Ivane Javakhishvili and others).

In 1915 Giorgi Machabeli had a secret meeting in Kutaisi with the heads of Georgia's leading political parties and trends viz. Noe Zhordania, Evgeni Gegechkori (Social-Democrats, Mensheviks), Grigol Rtskhiladze, Samson Pirtskhalava (Federalists), Revaz Gabashvili and Shalva Amirejibi (National-Democrats). The participants of the meeting received full information about the aims and activities of the Liberation Committee, got acquainted with the documents that Machabeli had brought.

The question of Georgia's independence was supported, the agreement concluded by the Committee was approved, but the article of organizing a rebellion was found unacceptable. The idea of anti-Russian uprising did not have any supporters in Georgia, it was not approved by the Georgian students either, and finally it was rejected.

The Russian gendarmerie learned about the existence of the Georgia's Liberation Committee at the very outset of World War I, and increased its vigilance. In October of 1914 Tbilisi Armenian newspaper "The Horizon" published the information about the activities of the Committee in Istanbul. In the same period of time a leaflet was spread in some districts of Western Georgia, appealing to the people to restore the independence of Georgia in alliance with Turkey.

All this seemed to be very dangerous, the more so as Nicholas II was arriving in Georgia to check up the readiness of the Caucasian army for fighting. His arrival was expected in November, 1914.

The Georgian Charity Organization and the national newspapers and magazines managed to dispel the rumors at the cost of hard efforts. The local nobility arranged an impressive reception to the Emperor. Nicholas II left Tbilisi pleased; he did not doubt the Georgians' sincerity and their trustworthiness.

In spite of the fact that the Georgian population remained loyal to the Russian government during the whole war, the headquarters of the Region still tried to take a revenge and chose Ajara for this purpose.

On March 4th, 1915 the Petrograd Dispatch Agency spread "a secret dispatch" "obtained" by the security Service of the Empire without a commentary. It said that anti-State feelings were noticed among the Moslem population of the Batumi district, and they were getting ready for an armed uprising against Russia.

Relying on the provocative dispatch of the Agency Russian chauvinists launched a slanderous campaign. They accused the Ajara population of separatism and treason. The Caucasian administration intended to sack the district and punish the population. They sent punitive expeditions to the district, burned and raided scores of villages, oppressed the people, hanged several suspects without a trial. 400 people were arrested for treason.

The progressive Georgian society, every national establishment, periodic press rallied to save the Mohammedan fellow-countrymen. The best lawyers were selected to defend the accused, Akaki Chkhenkeli, member of the 4th State Council elected deputy from this district, vigorously interceded for his innocent fellow-countrymen, and the government



retreated, it was compelled to admit that the Moslem population was not all guilty of treason.

In 1916 the Grand Duke Mikhail Romanov, the uncle of Nicholas II, was appointed viceroy of the Caucasus instead of Vorontsov-Dashkov, the new viceroy played an important part in relieving the punishment of the convicted Moslem Georgians. Aiming at winning the indigenous population over to his side, Mikhail Romanov put forward the question of the elective district council, etc.

To be objective it must be said that compared to his predecessor, the Grand Duke was well disposed towards Georgians, but this did not mean much. The national-political forces of Georgia were not satisfied with obtaining a good disposition of the government any longer, they were not content with a restricted local self-government either. The search for the concrete ways of liberating Georgia from Russia was already on the agenda.

Georgia in the Period of 1917 February Revolution and Later

The 1917 February Revolution in Russia and the political situation in Georgia

In February 1917 Russian autocracy was overthrown. This event was justly called "a great revolution" in its time, though later on the Communist historiography removed the epithet "great" from it, and added it to the revolution that took place in October of the same year.

The fall of monarchy in Russia was a date of historical importance. It was the beginning of two great and important processes: 1. the disintegration of the empire, and 2. building a democratic state of Russia. The first one developed successfully and in a short period of time the majority of the conquered peoples of the peripheries left the Metropolis. As for the second process, it did not last long, for the country, used to the despotic regime, did not adapt to democracy at once. The provisional government, formed by the Deliberative Council, and the street contended for power, first these were workers' and peasants' social-democratic or Socialist-Revolutionaries' councils (soviets), and from October 1917 – the Bolshevik party which got hold of power by violence, and got rid of both.

The February Revolution which factually had not been prepared by any party, happened unexpectedly. Petrograd was its epicenter. The disturbance, begun in Russia's capital spontaneously, turned into a mass strike on February 23rd. Soon the workers on strike were joined by the detachments of Petrograd garrison. Many thousands of rebellious masses threatened the government with destruction. Nicholas II abdicated. The revolution won a victory.

The viceroy of the Caucasus, Nikolai Nikolaevich, concealed this fact for a few days, but this news was learned in Georgia by secret ways. Moscow University students V. Nozadze and G. Pagava sent a telegram to the newspaper "Tanamedrove Azri" ("Modern Thinking"), published in Tbilisi, saying, "Mtavrobadze died in Petrograd. Let everybody



know about it (Mtavrobadze is a name made of the word "mtavroba" – government and dze – the ending of the Georgian surnames). On March 4th the periodic press also began to publish the information about the Russian revolution.

People welcomed the overthrowing of tsarism. Innumerable meetings and manifestations were arranged to celebrate the removal of a colonial yoke. The last viceroy left Tbilisi. There was no government for some time. One of the publicists of those days remarked, "Georgia is like a class which the teacher has just left". What and how this teacher taught the Georgian people is a separate question, but the fact is that the overthrowing of the autocracy caused anarchy and chaos temporarily.

The influential political forces took the responsibility of stabilizing the situation. Before the Provisional Government created its governmental structures, a council of workers' deputies was founded in Tbilisi. Noe Zhordania was elected its president*. Similar councils were set up in other towns of Georgia at the beginning of March. Social-Democrats (Mensheviks) were the majority in these councils.

Alongside the workers the soldiers of the Caucasian army also began to found their councils. The soldiers' councils sprang up in those regional and district centers where Russia's military detachments were stationed. The majority in the soldiers' councils was represented by Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries. Soon the Tbilisi workers' and soldiers' councils were united. Noe Zhordania was put at the head of the united council.

On March 6th, 1917 Tbilisi Executive Committee, the body of the local government, was elected on the coalition basis, with the participation of Tbilisi Council of Workers' Deputies, the deputies to the City Council, public organizations and political parties. It was to be governed by N. Zhordania, the city Mayor A. Khatisov and Officer V. Popov who were appointed Commissars. In spite of the fact that similar establishments were founded in other regional towns the real power was in the hands of Tbilisi Executive Committee. It performed the function of administrative governing of all Georgia and for some time of the whole Southern Caucasus.

The workers' and soldiers' councils did not endeavor to take the whole power in their hands. The elective councils established regional government as well (the Regional Center of workers, soldiers and peasants of Transcaucasia, etc.), but they were content with the revolutionary influence of the government, and according to the terminology of those days, they restricted themselves "by defending and strengthening the achievement of the revolution".

As for the achievement, it was very important: national oppression was done away with, there were no punitive expeditions any more, the gendarmerie and okhranka were annulled, censorship was abolished, and democratic freedom was beginning to flourish.

The main social-political forces became loyally disposed towards Russia's provisional government, approved of its decision to entrust the Constituent Assembly with the question of establishing the state system. The Constituent Assembly would be elected democratically in the near future.

On March 18th, 1917 a Transcaucasian special committee, a supreme organ of the civil government (OZACOM), began to work. It was to be a representative of Russia's

* The well-known Georgian Social-Democrat Nikoloz (Karlo) Chkheidze was at the head of Petrograd Workers' and Soldiers' Council, he was elected President of the Central Executive Committee of all Russia.



provisional government in this region. Cadets B. Kharlamov (president) and M. Papajanov, Mussavatist N. Japarov, Social-Democrat (Menshevik) A. Chkhenkeli (all of them deputies to the 4th State Council) and a Socialist-Federalist K. Abashidze became members of the OZACOM.

The Special Committee promised to do many things for the population, among them settling the problem of land, the reform of justice, establishing a local self-government, etc.

The Southern Caucasus was an ethnically variegated, multinational region. The steps taken by OZACOM, did not meet the demands and interests of every nation and nationality equally, therefore, on a proportional basis, a council of nationalities was established beside the new government, consisting of the representatives of the Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani political parties. Also several special committees, extraordinary councils, and extraordinary committees were set up, but their work was not distinguished by great effectiveness. The practical results were insignificant against the background of innumerable debates, appeals, decrees and resolutions.

The official and revolutionary government of the region, extraordinary committees and councils, co-existed peacefully. It is true that moderate political forces expressed their discontent with the slow and irresolute activities of the OZACOM, demanded more revolutionary actions and quick democratic reforms, they did not like the appearance of the officials, working in the tsar's times, etc., but they did not radically oppose the government and thought that it was quite possible that "free Georgia should exist in free Russia".

It was the Bolsheviks that generated discord in the general feeling. Following Lenin's instruction, they made it their aim to prepare a social revolution and overthrow the existing government by force. The Bolsheviks' destructive slogans found the response of soldiers tired of the long war and among the peasantry. The soldiers left the front line in many places of their own free will, hurried home, and quite frequently started marauding. The poor peasantry did not evade robbing other people's property either. The cases of appropriation of landlords' and state lands became quite frequent. Alongside the government, all this was opposed by the political parties of national character. The latter asked the population to act calmly and decently before their problems were decided by the government.

The restoration of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church

The Georgian clergy also became more active after the autocracy had been overthrown. On March 12, 1917 the Church Council whose meeting was held in Mtskheta in the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and its walled yard, declared the renewal of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church in the presence of 10000 people. Guria-Samegrelo bishop Leonide was made head of the Church before the catholicos was elected. The executive committee, the provisional management of the church was formed, including clergy and secular persons. This decision was sent to the provisional government for confirmation, it being a legal successor of the tsar's government.



The Petrograd Georgians (Z. Avalishvili, I. Javakhishvili, K. Chkheidze and others) also did their best to hasten and crown this process successfully in the supreme structures of the government and in the respective structures of the Synod.

The autocephaly having been restored, the last exarch of Georgia had nothing to do there, but he did not intend to leave his post and expected assistance from the center.

Proceeding from its democratic character, the provisional government could not be against the restoration of the autocephaly of the Georgian church, the more so as apart from the clergy, the whole Georgian nation demanded it. At the same time the same government did not want to restrict the imperial interests either as it would be followed by the abolition of the rights of Russia's synod in the region.

A kind of a compromise was found in Petrograd: the government acknowledged the national character of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, but did not give it territorial borders. The orthodox Christian Russians and other non-Georgian believers were to remain under the Synod. The Synod turned the Georgian exarchate into the Caucasian exarchate. Platon, appointed exarch, was Tbilisi metropolitan too.

This decision of Russia's provisional government was met with discontent in Georgia. The violation of the canonical principle and exterritorial autocephaly (to have two hierarchs independent of each other in one and the same region) was certain to cause anger. The temporary management of the Georgian Church expressed their protest publicly. The Georgian ecclesiastics were not against the local Russian population's having a Russian bishop with a wide autonomy who would be nominally dependent on the head of the Georgian Church. But they would not allow and did not put up with the fact of the existence of two churches with equal rights in Georgia. In such a case the danger of removing the Sukhumi Eparchy from the Georgian Church seemed to be quite real. With this purpose various projects were prepared and discussed in the Synod.

The Georgian Church continued fighting, for broadening its rights and competence and establishing a complete autocephaly. All Georgia's church council was convened in Tbilisi on 8-17 September, 1917. The Council confirmed the regulations of managing the autocephalous church and elected Bishop Kirion (Giorgi Sadzaglishvili) Catholicos Patriarch of Georgia.

Releasing the Georgian Church from the long captivity of the Synod was Georgian nation's spiritual liberation, a significant step made towards its political independence. It was a fresh impulse for the struggle of restoring the Georgian statehood.

The National Council of Georgia

The 1917 February revolution shook the foundation of the integrity of the Russian state. The process of liberating oppressed nations gained a strong stimulus. The standard of fighting for independence was simultaneously raised in Finland, Poland, Ukraine and in Baltic countries. The remote aim of Georgia's liberation from an abstract idea turned into a practical task. Now it all depended on coordinated and sensible actions of the political elite, on whether they would be able to consolidate their forces in the fight for the common cause, or they would repeat the mistake of 1905. The political parties that were becoming leaders of the nation's social-political life should give an example of consolidation to the people.



The overthrowing of the autocracy hastened the formation of a civil society in Georgia.

Numerous councils, committees, professional and creative unions sprang up all of a sudden; a great number of corporations, associations and unions appeared. There were sufficient human resources for that in Georgia. Educated people, full of initiative, could be easily found in the country. The revolution enabled them to reveal their inner potential. It was only necessary to have a center that would collect this great national energy, a leading organ that would subordinate this energy to one will and would find the right way of its development. The leaders of political parties took this mission upon themselves.

In March of 1917 the representatives of the Social-Democrats(Mensheviks),the Federalist party, the National-Democrats and the Socialist-Revolutionaries founded the organ of political agreement, called "the National Committee" and at the beginning of April "The Inter Party Meeting " an organization, uniting Georgia's political parties and trends, was formed. Later on the meeting changed its name and was called "the Inter-Party Information Bureau of Georgia", and afterwards it was called "Georgia's National Inter-Party Council". Its work was supervised by the executive committee, headed by Akaki Chkhenkeli. Military, financial, information sections, a section of foreign affairs, etc. were established. The foundation, set up by the efforts of the Council, was to prepare a financial basis for Georgia's future statehood. The formation of Georgian military detachments began; the first steps were taken to nationalize schools, etc.

The inter-party council took it upon itself to protect the national rights of Georgia. In September of 1917 the council sent a delegation to Petrograd to a democratic conference in which the members of Russia's provisional government also took part*. Akaki Chkhenkeli who spoke at the conference on behalf of the Georgian people, said that the Georgian nation, its political parties already had a clear-cut idea of the Georgian issue. They aspired to the national, political autonomy of Georgia, and they would present their demand to Russia's Constituent Assembly officially.

The delegates of the National-Democratic party and the Federalists' party (Ioseb Machavariani, Ioseb Baratashvili) informed the participants of the Moscow state conference and the Kiev nations' congress of the Georgian people's wish to restore the lost freedom and statehood. It happened in 1917.

Kiev Congress acknowledged the political right of every nation living in the former empire and found it necessary to found a national council which was to assist the establishment of the autonomous and federative system in Russia. As for the Moscow conference, A.Kerenski, faithful to the idea of "the united and indivisible Russia" did not support the aspirations of the oppressed nations; on the contrary, he even condemned the almost already real freedom of Finland and Ukraine.

Russia's initial provisional government was replaced by a coalition government. The members of the latter changed several times. On September 1st, 1917 Russia was even declared to be a republic, several laws of social character were adopted etc., but the government did not do anything for the self-determination of peripheral nations.

The instability and weakness of the provisional government, the endless war, the disorder in many social- economic problems, etc. enabled the Bolsheviks to arrange a revolution on October 25, 1917 and get hold of power. A soviet system - the dictatorship

* For some time the Georgian Social-democrat Irakli Tsereteli held the post of Russia's minister of postal services.



of proletariat (the same Bolshevik Party) was established in Russia. Lenin was at the head of the new government, called the Soviet of People's Commissars. In this situation the inter-party council, acting in Tbilisi, decided to found an organ with more rights which would act more legitimately on behalf of the entire Georgian nation.

Georgia's national congress consisting of the representatives of Georgia's political parties, workers' councils, self-governing bodies of towns, of cultural-educational and trade and financial establishments, national minorities and others, was held on 19-22 November, 1917. 324 delegates had deciding votes, and 19-deliberative votes. The representatives of neighboring nations and foreign states, the commander-in-chief of the Caucasian army, the leaders of the Georgian church, etc. were present at the congress.

The congress was opened by Akaki Chkhenskeli by the warrants of the inter-party council. It was Noe Zhordania who spoke on the main problem. "The situation today and the political state of the Georgian nation."

It was necessary to act extremely cautiously and prudently in the situation when the world war was going on, when the interests of big states clashed in the Region, and the front line was not very far from Tbilisi. In Noe Zhordania's opinion, Georgia was to remain loyal to Russia in this situation, only not the Soviet-Bolshevik Russia, but a Democratic Russia whose Constituent Assembly was to make Georgia's autonomy legal.

The participants of the Congress discussed other alternatives as well. The National-Democrats G. Veshapeli, G. Gvazava and Sh. Karumidze spoke against Noe Zhordania's idea. They considered the public acknowledgement of the pro-Russian course unacceptable from the tactical point of view, for this might hinder the liberation of Georgia in the future. D. Chikovani, the delegate of the Radical-Democratic party, was to raise the question of restoring Georgia's independence at the congress, but finally the representatives of national-political forces thought it better not to arouse discord in the general feeling and supported the resolution that declared that the Georgian nation was of pro-Russian orientation.

The leader of the Georgian nobility (tavads and aznaurs) K. Apkhazi gave the collective property of this class to Georgia's National Congress on behalf of the Georgian nobility. The cost of the property, collected in the period over a century was equal to 60 million Russian roubles.

The Congress discussed many actual problems, important for the country, and adopted respective resolutions.

Georgia's National Congress elected a National Council which consisted of 60 members at first, and mainly united representatives of political parties (25 Social-Democrats (Mensheviks), 10 Federalists, 9 National-Democrats, 7 Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc.) The delegates of Moslem Georgia, and also of Zakatala District, of Abkhazians, Ossets and other national minorities had mandates of the national Congress.

The activities of the National Congress were supervised by a 15 men executive committee, formed according to a coalition principle. Noe Zhordania was elected president of both-the board and the executive committee.

The National Congress was an important event in the long history of fighting for Georgia's liberation. From that day a new different stage of fighting for the restoration of Georgia's statehood began. By forming the National Council, the Georgian government was established which appeared to be the helmsman of the fight for the national independence.



Georgia as part of the Transcaucasian Republic

The Soviet power spread in Russia's central industrial districts quite peacefully and very fast. In other parts of the country the Regime paved its way by means of arms. The Bolsheviks spread their influence on many detachments of field forces, on the Baltic and Black sea fleets. The situation was more complicated and conflicting in peripheries.

The title nations of Transcaucasia and the main political parties did not recognize the October revolution; they considered it to be an adventure and separated themselves from the Soviet Government. Only the local Bolsheviks were filled with hope, and encouraged by the support of Soviet Russia, began to get ready for an armed uprising. In the Transcaucasian regional committee of Bolsheviks it was decided to establish the Soviet government in Georgia with the help of the Caucasian army, but this intention was not realized.

In this situation the democratic political forces of the Region took steps to form a governmental structure. A new regional governmental body was established in Tbilisi on November 15, 1914 instead of the weakened OZACOM. It was the Transcaucasian Commissariat presided by the Social-Democrat Evgeni Gegechkori. It was a provisional regional government which was to act before Russia's Constituent Assembly was convened. The ruling circles of the USA, England and France supported the formation of the Transcaucasian Commissariat.

The Transcaucasian Commissariat had to work under hard conditions. The war went on, but the soldiers who had become Bolsheviks left the battlefield wilfully.

Only Caucasian volunteers, Georgians and Armenians, remained on the front. They defended their homes and native land more than the frontiers of the Empire. This circumstance made it easier for the Turks to enter the territory of the Region. Herewith, the disorderly mass of the soldiers, leaving the fronts, threatened the peaceful life of the country.

The Commissariat managed to conclude armistice with the Osman Empire, they disarmed the soldiers going home from the Caucasian front and sent them to Russia without letting them enter Tbilisi. The formation of the local national regiments and their equipping began.

After the Bolsheviks had seized power in Russia a bloody civil war broke out in the country. Economic and other contacts with other parts of the state were broken off. Moscow did not recognize the Transcaucasian commissariat as it was, therefore the economic and financial relations with the southern Caucasus practically stopped. The commissariat started producing paper-money, a decree of establishing elective self-governing bodies, abolishing titles, establishing an eight-hour working day, etc. was issued. The regulation of the commissariat in the agrarian sphere was also important. It envisaged the distribution of the fiscal, the former royal and other lands to the peasantry by means of special committees, and to define the norm of the plot of land by them.

The elections to the Constituent Assembly were held on almost the whole territory of the former Russian empire in November, 1917. The Bolsheviks did not dare to prevent the elections popular with the wide masses of the population. The results of the elections were not very good for them. In southern Caucasus the Georgian social-democrats



(Mensheviks) won the election. The Armenian Dashnaktsyutun and Azerbaijani Musavatist parties also got the mandates of the constituent assembly, though they were not given a chance of taking part in defining the future of the Russian state. On January 6, 1918 the Constituent Assembly, gathered in Petrograd palace of Tavrida, were dispersed by the Bolsheviks. The establishing of democracy in Russia was put an end to.

The Transcaucasian commissariat, in accord with the influential political parties of the Region, decided to convene a legislative body of the Region-seim. The south Caucasian deputies to Russia's dismissed Constituent Assembly took part in the work of the seim. The Georgian social-democrats had a majority in the new governmental council. Nikoloz (Karlo) Chkheidze was made chairman of the seim. The government was first formed by Evgeni Gegechkori, and later on by Akaki Chkhenkeli.

Russia's Bolshevik government, engaged in the civil war, did not yet have time for the peripheries, but it did not conceal its loyalty to Russia's integrity as a state, and that it would not allow its disintegration into national units. Lenin managed to retain his power, and strengthened it by concluding a separate peace with Germany and its bloc. This peace-treaty, signed in Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918, turned out to be very painful for the Georgian and Armenian peoples. Russia gave up Batumi, Kars and Artaani districts to Turkey, Germany's ally. Germany did not appear to be against it, but demanded that a referendum should be held in those districts.

The official representatives of the southern Caucasus did not take part in the work of the peace -conference. Nobody had asked for their consent to the alienation of those districts. The member of Georgia's liberation committee G. Machabeli specially arrived in Brest, did his best within the framework of his competence, but having no respective credentials, was unable to influence the final result. The Transcaucasian Seim did not recognize the Brest peace -treaty and protested the unlawful decision.

The weak party was not supported by anybody. Russia washed its hands of it. Turkey insisted on getting back "her own territories" and practically occupied them. The government of Transcaucasia tried to stop the Turkish expansion by diplomatic means.

Turkey agreed to carry out negotiations with the purpose that what she had acquired by the Brest peace-treaty should also be confirmed by the Government of Transcaucasia.

The peace conference began its work in Trebizond on March 14, 1918, and lasted a month with a short interval. The aspiration of the Transcaucasian delegation (headed by A. Chkhenkeli) to retain the frontier that they had had before the 1914 war was futile. The Turks demanded that the foundation of the negotiations should be unconditional fulfilment of the Brest agreement and that Transcaucasia should become a sovereign state.

The Seim hesitated. The tactics of prolonging time, "let's not hurry, let's get ready first" would not do for a long time, the more so as getting ready for defence was not effective, besides Turkey wanted to get the final answer without delay.

On April 13, 1918 the Seim recalled its delegation from the negotiations and declared martial law in the country. An "interval" was announced at the peace conference, but in reality it came to an end.

Being in the process of formation and worried by internal disagreement and contradictions, the Transcaucasian State was unable to offer resistance to Turkey. In spite of this, it began war against Turkey. The Turks managed to occupy Batumi, seized



Ozurgeti and became considerably active in Samtskhe-Javakheti, in the direction of Akhaltsikhe.

The Georgian detachments stopped the enemy's attack near the river Choloki, but there was still danger of the Turks' invasion.

On April 9 (22), 1918 the Seim published a declaration of separating from Russia and adopted a resolution of establishing an independent Federative Republic of Transcaucasia. Akaki Chkhenkeli was elected head of the new government. It was also decided to continue peace-negotiations with Turkey. The negotiations were to take place in the town of Batumi.

The Transcaucasian Commissariat and Seim faced internal hardships alongside external difficulties. It is true, they agreed upon being one state, but the social-political forces of all the three countries – Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, considered the Federative Republic of Transcaucasia to be a temporary formation. The national councils of all these three peoples were preparing for the future; they made up committees working on the question of territorial borders, establishing frontiers, and constitution. The suppression of the anarchical disturbances, spread so wide in the villages of the Region, was no less problematic.

Peasants' disturbances, caused by agrarian questions, broke out in several districts of Georgia. The situation was especially serious in Abkhazia and Inner Kartli, inhabited by Ossets. The soldiers who had returned from the front formed armed detachments; they did not obey the governmental bodies, assaulted landowners' families, seized the state property, robbed and raided the civilian population.

The local Bolsheviks, acting according to Lenin's instructions and by the support of Soviet Russia, connected their actions with the question of self-determination of Abkhazs and Ossets and began to fight for establishing the Soviet government. The insurgent Ossets demanded that Inner Kartli should be integrated into Russia, and the Abkhazs wanted Abkhazia to become part of Russia.

The government was compelled to suppress these anti-state disturbances and restore order with the help of military force.

These inner hardships were more or less overcome. But the political units forming the Transcaucasian State were unable to reach consensus in choosing a foreign policy. Georgia's political elite was pro-German, Armenia looked towards England and Azerbaijan's favorite was Turkey.

In Such a situation it was difficult for the Transcaucasian Federative Republic to achieve success in the resumed peace-negotiations with Turkey.

On May 11, 1918 a peace-conference of Turkey and Transcaucasia was opened in Batumi. The renewed delegation of Transcaucasia was again headed by A. Chkhenkeli. Turkey's mission was supervised by the Minister of Justice-Halil Bey.

Soviet Russia also intended to take part in Batumi Conference, but her request was left unanswered by the government of Transcaucasia. As for Germany, her representatives, headed by General von Losoff, joined Batumi negotiations as an intermediary. The German delegation consisted of Count Shuhlenburg, connected with Georgia's Liberation Committee, O. Vezendock, etc. The Germans were accompanied by Petre Surguladze, President of Georgia's Liberation Committee, acting as their counselor. This fact was not at all fortuitous.

Leaders of political parties of Georgia



Noe Zhordania



Karlo Chkheidze



Irakli Tsereteli



Spiridon Kedia



Giorgi Laskhishvili



Samson Pirtskhalava



Երևանում ամբողջությամբ փակվեցին բոլոր խանութները, օգնականները և ծառայողները հանձնվեցին խնայողական առաջ 1919 թ. հունիսի 23-ի, հունիսի 24-ին և օգոստոսի 1-ին Երևանում զբաղվեցին խնայողական առաջ 1919 թ. հունիսի 26-ի, հանրապետության 5 և 10 թ. մարտի 1-ին Երևանում ամբողջությամբ փակվեցին բոլոր խանութները, օգնականները և ծառայողները հանձնվեցին խնայողական առաջ 1919 թ. հունիսի 26-ի, հանրապետության 5 և 10 թ. մարտի 1-ին Երևանում ամբողջությամբ փակվեցին բոլոր խանութները, օգնականները և ծառայողները հանձնվեցին խնայողական առաջ 1919 թ. հունիսի 26-ի, հանրապետության 5 և 10 թ. մարտի 1-ին

1. *Handwritten text, likely a signature or name, is present at the top of the page.*

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 1, 1861. It is a formal address, and it is the first of its kind since the signing of the Constitution. The President, James Buchanan, is addressing the Congress, and he is doing so in a very formal and dignified manner. He is discussing the state of the Union, and he is also discussing the issue of slavery. He is saying that the Union is in a state of crisis, and that he is doing everything in his power to maintain it. He is also saying that he is not going to allow the Union to be divided over the issue of slavery.

Հայկական Դեմոկրատիկ Միությունը հայտարարում է, որ իր անդամները չեն մասնակցում Երևանի քաղաքապետի ընտրությանը, որտեղ իրենց ներկայացնում էր Երևանի քաղաքապետի ընտրության թեկնածու Մարտին Բաբայանը:

Հիմնականում այս պայմաններում համարվում են խոչընդոտող գործոններ, որոնք կարող են առաջացնել բացասական հետևանքներ։

[illegible]

Հենց նման հիմնարկն էլն էր իմ համար հիմնարկը և
հիմնարկը միջնակարգական ստանդարտը - հիմնարկը:

1990

2. Երկրաչափական հարաբերությունները:

۱- در صورتی که در هر یک از این موارد، کارشناسان فنی و تخصصی سازمان بازرسی راهکارهای مناسب را پیشنهاد کنند، مدیران ذیربط موظفند نسبت به اجرای آن اقدامات لازم را بجا آورده و گزارش اقدامات انجام شده را به مراجع ذیربط ارائه دهند.

15. Երկրագնդի տարածությունը մեծանում է արագորեն, և հետևաբար մեծանում է նաև մարդկային համայնքի թիվը։

1. Եթե հարկային օրենսդրությունը համապատասխանում է իրականությանը, ապա հարկերը պետք է հավասարապես բեռնադրվեն բոլորի վրա:

[illegible]

1. By 1910-15
 2. By 1915-20
 3. By 1920-25
 4. By 1925-30
 5. By 1930-35
 6. By 1935-40
 7. By 1940-45
 8. By 1945-50
 9. By 1950-55
 10. By 1955-60
 11. By 1960-65
 12. By 1965-70
 13. By 1970-75
 14. By 1975-80
 15. By 1980-85
 16. By 1985-90
 17. By 1990-95
 18. By 1995-2000
 19. By 2000-05
 20. By 2005-10
 21. By 2010-15
 22. By 2015-20
 23. By 2020-25
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 25. By 2030-35
 26. By 2035-40
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 29. By 2050-55
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 33. By 2070-75
 34. By 2075-80
 35. By 2080-85
 36. By 2085-90
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The negotiations were strained. The Transcaucasian party was now ready to recognize the terms of the Brest peace-treaty, but the Turks wanted more, viz. Akhaltsikhe-Akhalkalaki district and a great part of Yerevan Region. In this way the 1828 frontier would be practically restored and Turkey would be able to have a political control over the whole Caucasus. Germany would not put up with Turkey's increased territorial claims either, the latter being part of the pan-Islamic "Turan" plan, the more so as the Ottomans had taken practical steps to achieve their goal – they had occupied Alexandropol and began to get ready for the attack in the direction of Yerevan-Tbilisi.

The Turks began clandestine negotiations in the lobby of the Batumi conference with the representatives of Azerbaijan and the Northern Caucasus. They discussed the question of the political reorganization of Transcaucasia and the plans of turning it into a pro-Osmanli united state.

Such a development of events, acceptable to Azerbaijan, would be disastrous for Georgia and Armenia. The protection of the integrity of the country was becoming impossible. Now the Georgians, Armenians and Azerbaijani would have to take care of their safety separately.

The Georgian members of the Transcaucasian delegation (Akaki Chkhenkeli, Niko Nikoladze, Zurab Avalishvili, Spiridon Kedia) took advantage of the agreement, concluded by the Georgia's Liberation Committee with Germany as early as 1914 and the fact that the governments of central states confirmed in 1917 once more their readiness to recognize Georgia's independence as a state if it was declared.

Germany appeared true to her word. Benevolent and businesslike relationship was established between von Losoff and Akaki Chkhenkeli. A plan of restoring Georgia's independence under Germany's protectorate was made up. A. Chkhenkeli immediately informed the Executive Committee of Georgia's National Council about it.

Germany's support of Georgia's independence was conditioned by her strategic, economic and political interests in the Region. These interests were not against Georgia's national aspiration. Besides, only Germany could rescue Georgia from Turkey's expected occupation at that time.

Georgia's national council after a long debate agreed to the idea of restoring Georgia's independence and prepared grounds for declaring it.

On May 20 Noe Zhordania arrived in Batumi. He discussed concrete questions of the relations between Georgia and Germany with von Losoff, and returned to Tbilisi. Now he was to convince the Azerbaijani and the Armenian members of the Transcaucasian Seim of the necessity of their peaceful separation. N. Zhordania fulfilled this mission successfully.

On May 26, 1918 the last sitting of the Transcaucasian legislative organ was held. The Seim confirmed the disintegration of the Transcaucasian Federative Republic and the self-liquidation of the Seim was declared. That very day Georgia's National Council got together in the former residence of the viceroy of the Caucasus. This historic meeting was attended by 42 members of the Council and 36 candidates. After a short introductory speech the chairman of the National Council Noe Zhordania read "the Act of Georgia's Independence" whose 1st article declared: "From this day on Georgia's people have sovereign rights and Georgia is an independent state, enjoying full rights". It was an event of the greatest importance in the modern history of Georgia. The Georgian nation's long



struggle for national independence was crowned with the restoration of Georgia's independent state on May 26, 1918.

Russian Rulers of the Caucasus. The Results of the Russian Rule in Georgia

Knorring (1801-1802). Russian rule in Eastern Georgia was officially established from May 8th, 1802, but in reality it began a year earlier and she was temporarily governed by General Lazarev. General Karl von-Knorring was appointed the first commander-in-chief of Georgia, now a province. He had played a great part in the annexation of Kartli and Kakheti and abolition of this kingdom.

Apart from Eastern Georgia, he was the supreme ruler of the territories to be conquered later on. He was also charged with winning over to Russia's side the local rulers (khans, shamkhals, princes, etc.). A considerable amount of finances was allotted for this purpose. He was also to take care of the increase of fiscal revenue.

A military regime was practically established in Kartli and Kakheti. The assistant of the commander-in-chief – the civilian ruler of Georgia was also a military man. This post was held by General Kovalenski in Knorring's times.

The imperial government demanded that Knorring's administration should impress the population favorably, that they should win the confidence and authority of people in order that the Georgian people should feel that the Russian government and law were better than the local ones.

The Russian rule of the Caucasus did not appear to be up to the mark, for the officials appointed to the posts, their majority, were not prepared for them.

Mainly uneducated people, not suited to the work given to them, were sent here. They had not even reached the rank of a college assessor in their country.

Knorring did not stay in Tbilisi long. He trusted Kovalenski with managing civilian affairs of the province, appointed Lazarev head of the Russian army deployed in Georgia, and he himself went to Georgievsk.

The reputation of the new government of the conquered country became tarnished at the very outset. A foreign regime, based on violence, was unacceptable to Georgians, but the population's discontent was still more aggravated by the unruliness of Russian officials, their injustice and arbitrary rule. It was Kovalenski himself who gave an example of immorality. This greedy and bribe-taker ruler only thought of gaining wealth, and the country was left unprotected.

Knorring and Kovalenski were unable to cope with the task they were charged with, they were uable to establish order in the newly annexed province. The aristocracy, discontented with the Russian rule, sent complaint after complaint to the Emperor's court. The Russian officials also denounced their generals in St. Petersburg. Alexander I was compelled to dismiss Knorring from his post and recall him from the Caucasus.

Tsitsianov (1803-1806). In September, 1803 Pavel Tsitsianov was sent to Georgia as a commander-in-chief instead of Knorring. He was Georgian by origin and was related to Mariam, the widow of Giorgi XII.



P. Tsitsianov had received a military education. The gifted and purposeful prince (tavad) was also distinguished by his good knowledge of French. He had made a name for himself in taking part in the Russo-Turkish war for which he was raised to the rank of major-general.

In 1796-1797 Tsitsianov was a commandant of Baku, after this he gave up military service and settled down in his estate in the Minsk Province.

The Russianized Georgian, extremely loyal to the throne, had not been chosen for this post accidentally. His being "Georgian" was to quiet down the distrust of the Kartli-Kakheti population, deprived of their own king, of the "co-religionist protector". The government had also taken into consideration the fact that Tsitsianov had served in Azerbaijan and he would understand the complicated political situation of the Caucasus better than anybody else.

The new commander-in-chief, given exclusive rights, was set important objects. He was to win aristocracy over to his side and put an end to the disturbances, begun in Eastern Georgia. Tsitsianov was to act with the purpose of spreading Russia's protectorate over Imereti and in the direction of the Caspian Sea. The commander-in-chief had another special mission as well – he was to deport the members of the king's family to Russia.

Tsitsianov considerably enlarged the Empire's domains in Southern Caucasus. He made Imereti and Samegrelo Russia's subjects, he subjugated many Mohammedan khanates by force and he would have achieved more success had he not been treacherously killed at the approaches to Baku in February of 1806.

Having arrived in Georgia, Tsitsianov immediately tried to do away with the lack of discipline among the Russian officials. He dismissed dishonest officials from work at once, but it was not easy to replace the disgraced officials with a better personelle.

The steps he had taken to make the Russian methods of government closer to the Georgian system were not successful either. The population was also discontented when they had to pay taxes in money, not in natural products, etc...

Building a military road in Dariali Gorge started in Tsitsianov's times. The construction of Kutaisi-Surami one hundred kilometer long road was finished. The printing house of Erekle's times was repaired, an official census of Tbilisi population was conducted, a school for aristocracy was founded, the first chemist's shop was opened and concrete steps were taken to found a theatre in Tbilisi. But many bad deeds are also connected with Tsitsianov's name. He deported a majority of the king's family members to Russia, suppressed the 1804 rebellion in the mountains, began to settle people of other nationalities in Georgia, etc.

Gudovich (1806-1809). A considerable part of the Georgian aristocracy (tavads and aznauris) thought that Tsitsianov would be substituted by a well-known Georgian commander Petre Bagrationi who lived in Russia, but the emperor decided to appoint Count Ivan Gudovich commander-in-chief in Georgia. It happened in 1806. The count being about 70 years old had had a long career. He had taken part in Russo-Turkish wars, at different times he had had a post of a military governor, head of the Caucasian line and had reached the rank of General-Anchef.

The new ruler, on arriving in Tbilisi, declared that he did not continue the activities of Tsitsianov, but corrected his mistakes.



In the period of Gudovich's rule Russia waged war with two countries – Iran and the Ottoman Empire. The commander-in-chief who had to fight on two fronts did not have time to attend to civilian affairs and he had not changed much in the existing order. As for his military achievements, he again invaded the Moslem domains, conquered by Tsitsianov, and appointed khans of Russian orientation their rulers. He conquered Baku Khanate and annexed it to the Empire, won a considerable victory in the Arapchai battle against the Ottomans, for which he was granted the rank of a field-marshal. The commander-in-chief was unable to overthrow Solomon II from the throne of Imereti and deport him to Russia. Gudovich was also unsuccessful in the diplomatic arena. He was to persuade the shah of Iran to agree to conclude a peace-treaty, and failed to do it. Gudovich's military expedition in Yerevan was also a failure with many losses for the Russians. Due to this fiasco the arrogant field-marshal was compelled to leave his post. His place was occupied by Alexander Tormasov by the decree of March 5, 1809.

Tormasov (1809-1811). The new commander-in-chief of Georgia was quite experienced in governing the peripheries of the Empire. He had first worked for years as a military governor of Kiev and then that of Riga. The active participant of the war against the Ottoman Empire, he had distinguished himself more in suppressing the uprising in Poland and became a cavalry general. "This man was fierce, haughty and ruthless", Prince Teimuraz (Teimuraz Batonishvili) wrote about him.

Tormasov could not boast of his morals either. In the rule of this money-loving commander-in-chief, according to the information of the Russian sources, bribery of the tsar's official exceeded all limits. Tormasov did not love, more than that, he hated the people he had been sent to govern.

Of the three years of his being on the post of the commander-in-chief he spent two fighting against the Imereti Kingdom. To achieve his aim he did not shun the attempts of winning the tavads loyal to the king over to his side and even sending assassins to kill King Solomon II.

Tormasov tried to expand the domains of the Empire at the expense of conquering the territory, belonging to Akhaltsikhe pasha. In 1810 he besieged the town of Akhaltsikhe with the united forces of Russians and Georgians, but he was unable to take it. The commander-in-chief, infuriated by the unsuccessful warfare, ordered his soldiers to raid the villages of the pasha's domain, and then he made 1500 Christian families leave their dwelling-places and took them away with him. He explained this deportation of the Christian population as his concern for their welfare, but in reality by this foolish act he "undermined the future of the Georgian Meskhети", Niko Berdzenishvili wrote.

Tormasov brought to an end the liquidation of the Imereti Kingdom; he also subordinated Abkhazia to Russia. The autocephaly of the Georgian Church was abolished with his direct interference and this important center of Georgian spiritual culture found itself in the captivity of the synod.

Tormasov left the Caucasus in 1811. Paulucci, a marquis, Italian by birth, was appointed commander-in-chief of Georgia.

Paulucci (1811-1812). Philip Paulucci, discontented with Napoleon's license in Italy, left his home-country in 1807 and emigrated to Russia. He was received in the military service as a colonel, but soon he was raised to the rank of a lieutenant-general. The Marquis was sent to Georgia in 1810 and served in the Russian army,



encamped there. According to Prince Teimuraz (Teimuraz Batonoshvili), Paulucci was "a squint-eyed man physically, spiritually and by his activities". But he differed from all the other previous commanders-in-chief by one quality, he had not had experience of the Russian bureaucratic style of government and could not put up with the officials' bribery and drunkenness, so widely spread among the Russian military men too. Paulucci also thought it unacceptable to make khans loyal by bribery to which the high officials resorted, and condemned this immoral custom.

Paulucci preferred the practice of adopting quick decisions, characteristic of the Georgian law, to the existing red-tape and the law full of formalities, and made an attempt to establish it in the spheres of administrative government and in the civil law.

At the beginning of Marquis Paulucci's rule plague was raging in Georgia, which killed a great number of people. Those who survived were not in good conditions either, for the epidemic was accompanied by the failure of crops and the population suffered from hardships. The commander-in-chief did not understand the created situation and aggravated it by collecting the taxes on bread by carrying out executions.

Paulucci managed to suppress the disturbances in the former Quba Khanate, but the Kakheti uprising turned out to be fateful for him. The commander-in-chief mercilessly burnt down a number of villages, punished many participants of the rebellion by hanging, though he was compelled to promise such concessions to the fighting Kakhetians whose realization was beyond his competence. The tsar's government saved their faithful servant by taking him away from the Caucasus and finding an appointment for him in some other place.

"Disturbances in Kakheti have been suppressed. The whole Georgia is quietened", General Paulucci reported to Alexander I leaving Georgia. He declared that in the short period of his rule he had acquired nothing but the favor of the Emperor.

Rtishchev (1812-1816). A new commander-in-chief Lieutenant-General Nicholas Rtishchev arrived in Georgia in 1812. He was a good-for-nothing, rank-and-file general who had received this rank in the reign of Catherine II, but had not distinguished himself either in the military or administrative arena. Of course, Georgia would not flourish under the guidance of such a ruler, and, indeed, his five-year long rule turned out to be colorless and lacking in vividness. Rtishchev punished the rebellious Kakheti ruthlessly. Obeying his order, the Russian army chopped off Kakheti orchards and vineyards entirely, set fire to Akhmeta and Shilda, destroyed about 20 villages of the Khevsurs, etc. The infuriated commander-in-chief hanged, convicted for life and exiled to Siberia the participants of the uprising, and those who were not punished in the same way had to pay enormous tribute.

Rtishchev paid special attention to the Armenians, living in Georgia, and unlike the Georgians, appreciated them for being loyal and trustworthy subjects of the Russian Empire. Commander-in-chief Rtishchev tried to catch hold of Prince Alexandre (Alexandre Batonishvili), he even promised to pay a large sum of money to the person who would kill him, but all his attempts were futile. The only success that this high-rank official achieved was the peace-treaty he had concluded with Iran. The government raised Rtishchev to the rank of the infantry general for this service.

A slight change was made in the life of the Georgian church in the period of Rtishchev's rule: a Georgian-Imeretian synodal office was founded in Tbilisi, a certain novelty was





also introduced into the financial sphere, viz. Russian paper money (assignment) began to circulate in the Caucasus.

General Rtishchev was greatly influenced by his self-interested and immoral wife. This even more tarnished the name of this poor ruler.

Ermolov (1816-1827). The commander-in-chief that followed Rtishchev was General Alexei Ermolov. He came from a well-known, but indigent family and therefore he had to serve in the army from his youth. He fought side by side with Suvorov and Kutuzov, he was brought up on their traditions. The well-known general was glorified and admired by the whole Russia for the Patriotic War of 1812.

The young commander's popularity was enhanced by his certain love of freedom; due to this his name was connected with the Decembrist movement later on.

Nobody expected such a celebrated commander to be sent to the Caucasus which Alexander I himself called "warm Siberia".

The appointing of Ermolov commander-in-chief of the Caucasus made this part of the world an object of attention. "Bow your head, Caucasus, Ermolov is coming!" The imperial ambition of Russia's elite was revealed in these words of Pushkin.

"These people do not deserve the liberal rule of Alexander I, they need an iron baton", declared Ermolov on arriving in Georgia, and promised the government that he would fully subordinate the Caucasus very soon.

The years of Ermolov's rule are marked with particular cruelty. The new commander-in-chief abolished Shaki, Shirvan, Karabagh and Talish khanates once and for all. He considered their formal existence a disgrace for Russia and incorporated these provinces into the Russian Empire.

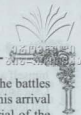
He next attacked Chechnya, Daghestan and Kabardinia. Aiming at subjugating the mountain peoples, he destroyed populated auls (villages in the Caucasus), massacred the peaceful population relentlessly, chopped off dense forests, built strongholds and settled Russian colonists instead of deported or slaughtered local population.

He treated the population of Western Georgia that rebelled in 1819-1820 with no less ferocity and hatred. According to Ermolov's order, Veliaminov and Gorchakov sacked and burned down very many villages in Imereti, Guria and Racha.

German colonists were settled in Georgia in Ermolov's times, and setting up compact settlements of retired Russian soldiers and officers began, etc.

It is true that the commander-in-chief tried to simplify the payment of taxes to landlords, but this project was not carried out. The only good that Ermolov's rule did to Georgia was establishing in 1822 a protective tariff on the goods, imported from Europe. This step stimulated the development of trade and drew our country into a wide world commodity circulation.

Ermolov's unceremonious and defiant attitude towards Abbas Mirza, the heir of the shah of Iran became the reason of breaking out of a new war between Russia and Iran. The commander-in-chief of the Caucasus could do nothing to the enemy that had invaded the territory of Azerbaijan and conducted only defensive operations. The new emperor Nicolas I who did not favor Ermolov as it was decided to recall him, due to the above-mentioned circumstances and appointed his favorite General Ivan Paskevich commander-in-chief of Georgia.



Paskevich (1827-1831). Count Paskevich, an active participant of all the battles against Napoleon, had been adjutant-general of infantry corps before his arrival in Georgia. Nicolas I had made him member of the Supreme Court at the trial of the Decembrists, and later on he entrusted him with governing the Caucasus.

Suspicious and ambitious by nature, the commander-in-chief began his activities with the actions contrary to those of Ermolov. He returned to old posts many suspicious officials and commanders, dismissed from work by the former government, and raised in rank a number of time-servers. Paskevich demanded that his subordinates should obey him tacitly; he could not stand daring people who had their own ideas and initiatives. He dismissed Giorgi Eristavi and Alexandre Chavchavadze from military service whose clever and courageous behavior decided the fate of the wars against Turkey and Iran. The success achieved in these two wars, brought Paskevich great fame. He was conferred the title of "Erivanski" for seizing the Yerevan fortress, and the rank of field-marshal for winning a victory over Turkey.

The commander-in-chief took an interest in civil affairs occasionally. It was during his rule that the autonomy of Gurian Principality was abolished, the population was freed from such taxes as was a compulsory selling of foodstuffs and forage to the Russian army that was connected with incessant crimes on the part of officials. Paskevich disapproved of Ermolov's system of the civil government and worked out a project of its radical transformation together with the inspectors, specially invited from St. Petersburg. He aspired to fully eradicate the local peculiarities of government and law that had been retained at the earlier stage of Russia's domination. The aforementioned project envisaged conferring the rights of a viceroy on the commander-in-chief in a number of issues. Emperor Nicolas I approved of this plan, but it was not Paskevich who was destined to put it into practice. He was recalled from the Caucasus in 1831 and sent to Warsaw with a large army to suppress the rebellion, begun there.

True, he did not have the honor of becoming a viceroy of the Caucasus, but after subduing the rebellious Polish patriots he was appointed viceroy of Poland with the title of a "brilliant Prince of Warsaw".

Rozen (1831-1837). Baron Rozen, like Count Paskevich, also fought against the rebellious Poland in 1831, but unlike the count the baron did not manage to distinguish himself by anything. In spite of this fact, he was trusted and appointed supreme ruler of the Caucasus.

Rozen did not know the country whose governor he had been appointed at all. He thought that the local population were extremely backward, uncultured people who lacked the ability of free thinking and did not even know what it was. The commander-in-chief saw quite a different picture. The 1832 uprising demonstrated to everybody that the Georgians were well aware of the notion of free-thinking and could give their lives to it.

The 1832 act was one of the most important events in the period of Rozen's rule. The demonstration of the conspirators' genuine purpose would tarnish the reputation of the commander-in-chief in the eyes of the Imperial government. That was the reason that Rozen concealed the real nature of the uprising: the conspirators escaped severe punishment, and the commander-in-chief being dismissed.

That very year Rozen achieved significant success in Daghestan, he was able to punish the insurgent mountain people, the leader of the Murides Qasi-Mola was killed in the battle, and the future Imam Shamil was wounded in the shoulder. Rozen showed





himself a man of principle when he opposed establishing a secret military police in the Caucasus. He also rejected the project of senators, sent by the Emperor, which envisaged full leveling of the civil governing with the Russian governing of provinces.

Opposing the high ranks of the government ended badly for Rozen. His opponents roused mistrust towards him at the Emperor's Court. Nicolas I who arrived in Georgia in the autumn of 1837 was displeased with the government there. Soon Rozen was dismissed from the post of a commander-in-chief and Adjutant-General Evgeni Golovin was appointed commander-in-chief instead of him.

The baron was the first Russian ruler of high rank in the Caucasus who had not only established close relations with the Georgian aristocracy, but also became related to one of them. Rozen's daughter was married to the Aide de-Camp to the Emperor G. Dadiani, a representative of the house of the Samegrelo principality.

Golovin (1837-1842). The new commander-in-chief was a rank-and-file general, with no capacity of taking the initiative. He had fought in many wars, but had been unable to make a name for himself. The follower of mysticism, Golovin could not boast of his administrative activities either, although he had been General-Governor of Warsaw.

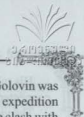
Golovin had won the Russian Tsar's favor by the devotion he had shown towards him when he ascended the throne. Herewith, the general was a steady follower of the style that the new emperor had introduced in Russia, and was used to barrack-like obedience, the discipline of flogging, and which also meant obeying all orders and fulfilling all formalities accurately.

Golovin, together with Senator Gahn, is considered to be the author of the bill the realization of which in the Caucasus Baron Rozen had been opposing for a long time, and which was adopted in April of 1840. According to this reform of the government this part of the country was divided in a different way. The Southern Caucasus was divided into Georgian and Imereti Provinces (gubernia) and the Caspian Region. Georgia proper was divided into seven districts, viz. those of Tbilisi, Gori, Telavi, Gurjaani, Kutaisi, Guria and Akhaltsikhe. Local laws and customs were completely revoked from the civil law; the indigenous population was deprived of the right of working in the governmental institutions. Unprecedented bureaucratism began to reign and the officials had greater opportunities to commit crimes.

The reform was of a colonial character. Its purpose was to subordinate the region politically and economically, to Russianize it in a short time and finally incorporate it into Russia. The reformed system became more unacceptable for the local population. Its putting into practice became a reason for an uprising in Guria in 1841. Armenia was also discontented, and there were disturbances in Azerbaijan as well.

Golovin's success in the mountain regions of the Northern Caucasus was also short-lived. There not only Chechens, but Daghestan and Kabardinia were getting ready to fight against Russia's violence under the leadership of Shamil, a new leader of the liberation movement.

The mountain peoples of the Caucasus were united by the religious teaching-Muridism which alongside the holy war-Hazavath, declared on Russia, was a reaction to the ruthless and relentless policy of the autocracy in this region.



The tsar's government found it very difficult to fight against the Murides. Golovin was unable to suppress the revolt of the Chechens. In the summer of 1842 Russia's expedition corps, consisting of many thousands of soldiers, was crushingly defeated in the clash with Shamil. The Empire's plans in the Caucasus were threatened with failure. Golovin was dismissed from his post and recalled to Russia. The name of this good-for-nothing commander-in-chief would not have remained in the history of Georgia, if his name had not been given to the main street of Tbilisi – today's Rustaveli Avenue.

Neidhart (1842-1844). Golovin's successor to the post of Georgia's commander-in-chief, the infantry general Alexander Neidhart, turned out to be a more insignificant person than his predecessor. Neidhart was experienced in fighting and in the work of headquarters. He had often been awarded prizes, but this distinguished general had no idea of administrative affairs.

Neidhart was the highest ruler of the Caucasus for two years, but he was unable to improve the situation in the military or civil sphere during this period. The faults of the reform, carried out in the region, became more visible. All the strata of the population expressed their discontent. It became clear that adjusting the Russian rule of provinces mechanically to other regions would not have desirable results. The government had no other way out, they had to make certain concessions and introduce some changes into the reform. The commander-in-chief became stricter in regard to undisciplined officials. He reacted duly to the violations that were taken notice of, but it was beyond his power to improve the bad system.

The situation was worse in the Northern Caucasus. The plans of military expeditions, compiled and approved in St. Petersburg were inadequate. The tactics of defensive fight that the Russians used brought grist to Shamil's mill. The military detachments of the Empire experienced failure after failure. The Murides got hold of the Russians' artillery, arms and supplies of bullets. Another rebellion broke out in Chechnya and Daghestan in 1843. The rebels occupied one of the settlements, seized by the Russians before. This achievement rallied the mountain people, fighting for liberty, more.

Neidhart tried to win Shamil's devoted naibs over to his side, among them the famous Haji Murat, but could do nothing.

The commander-in-chief was sent some reinforcements from Russia and asked to begin a decisive offensive. The considerably fortified Caucasian corps was much larger than the mountain peoples' force. The Russian arms were good too, but they were unable to use this advantage effectively. Shamil's warriors' courage and valor undermined Russia's military prestige. Neidhart asked for the permission to retire and left the Caucasus defeated.

Vorontsov (1844-1854). It became clear to the imperial power that the method of governing the Caucasus needed essential correction. Besides, a more appropriate person should be selected for the post of the ruler. According to the decree of Nicolas I the status of the Caucasus was changed and it became the territory to be governed by a viceroy.

Mikhail Vorontsov, a well-known person in the whole Russia, a representative of a very old family, was appointed viceroy of the Caucasus. Owing to his father who had worked in the diplomatic arena for a long time, and mainly lived abroad, Mikhail received a substantial European education, though he began his career in the military service. Beginning with 1823 Vorontsov was governor of Novorossia and Bessarabia.



His rule in these provinces was effective. The prosperity of Odessa and the Crimea is connected with Vorontsov's name.

The viceroy had the same rights as the minister. Both the legislative and administrative issues of the Region were not discussed in the State Council since this time.

They were presented to the Caucasian Committee in St. Petersburg, or the Emperor himself. The authorities of the Caucasus, as a rule, used military force and rough methods of administration to achieve their aim of Russianizing the local population and their final incorporation into the Russian Empire. Vorontsov resorted to a different method, he slightly loosened the reigns of governing the region, substituted rough violence by civilized methods, and by showing much kindness considerably accelerated the process of colonization.

Vorontsov traveled about the whole region and got acquainted with all its parts, which had not been done by any of his predecessors. The official Russian historian Potto pointed out: Vorontsov ruled over the Caucasus as if it were his native country, he tried to make the local population feel that Russia was their mother, and not a stepmother.

The viceroy helped to solve the procrastinated question of confirming the status of the Georgian aristocracy. Its results were that the social status of about 30 thousand tavads and aznauris was legalized. The same kind of council of the tavads and aznauris that had been acting in Tbilisi since 1803 was founded in Kutaisi for the privileged stratum of Western Georgia. Many questions, concerning the relations of masters and serfs were decided in favor of landowners, etc.

Vorontsov did his best to assist the development of trade in Georgia, smuggling was somewhat restricted, transit was broadened, customs-tariff was reduced and trade and communication roads were improved. Tbilisi was also changed. Two or three storeyed residential houses, other buildings were erected. A bridge of capital construction was built across the Mtkvari and new districts were built on the left bank of the river. Many cultural and educational institutions appeared, the viceroy paid special attention to them.

Vorontsov established special relationship with the highest stratum of the Georgian population. The viceroy did his best to have close relations with the local representatives of high society, to employ them in civil and military service, to make way for them to realize themselves in the public arena; he sent scores of young people to the university towns of the Empire to get an education at the expense of the state, etc.

Vorontsov often visited the family salons of Mariam Eristavi and Manana Orbeliani; he regularly invited members of aristocracy to the balls and fancy-dress balls, arranged by his wife. Close relations with the highest circles of society enabled the viceroy always to be in the know of what the aristocracy thought and felt, their national and political aspirations.

The attitude of the Georgian society towards Vorontsov was not similar. Part of the tavads and aznaurs whom the viceroy managed to make devoted to himself, considered him to be a well-wisher and benefactor of the country. Those who had seen the cunning of the viceroy from the very start, thought his rule "to be the period of deceiving Georgians" (Alexandre Orbeliani).

The cultural-educational measures-the renewal of the national theatre, founding a public library, gymnasiums, schools, publishing a monthly Georgian magazine, etc. realized on the initiative and with the participation of Vorontsov himself, in spite of the subjective purpose of the viceroy, objectively created preconditions of strengthening patriotic aspirations and national consciousness in the Georgian society. Simultaneously, Vorontsov's



colonial policy relaxed the Georgian people's political vigilance, assisted splitting their national consciousness and implied real danger of the degeneration of the indigenous population.

It depended upon the foresight of the guiding force of the public life, the aristocracy, their social flair and ability whether they would take advantage of the created situation and opportunities, or entrapped, they would become the servants of the conqueror's interests.

The elite of the Georgian society did not turn out to be equal to this task for lack of prescience. They obeyed Vorontsov's will more than took advantage of a favorable opportunity. That was why Ilia Chavchavadze called the reality of the 40s and 50s of the 19th century "the period of dozing, of our mental and national sleep and exhaustion".

Vorontsov was the highest authority in the Caucasus for ten years. During all this time the country's demographic expansion went on, more than 10000 Russian sectarians were settled in Georgia, among them Molokans, Dukhobors, Skoptsi and others.

At the end of 1848 Vorontsov, advanced in years, retired and left the Caucasus. After his death a monument to the first viceroy was erected in Tbilisi.

Muravyov (1854-1856). The successor of Vorontsov on the post of the viceroy of the Caucasus was Nikolai Muravyov, an infantry general. The brother of the Decembrist Alexander Muravyov he was also carried away by liberal views. A very educated and clever general was interested in scientific research as well. Muravyov had taken part in all the wars that Russia had waged in the first part of the 19th century, beginning with the war against Napoleon. There was an unpleasant period in the general's career as well. Muravyov presented to the Emperor in written form his critical attitude towards the situation in the army and bold ideas of improving it. Owing to this, he fell into disgrace and was dismissed from military service for 12 years. In 1848 Nicolas I returned Muravyov to the army, and in 1854 he even appointed him viceroy of the Caucasus. Vorontsov called this choice of the tsar a happy choice, but Muravyov himself was hostilely disposed towards his predecessor viceroy (He considered Vorontsov to be one of those who had played a certain part in his unjust punishment). He looked at all the activities of Vorontsov in the Caucasus askance.

Muravyov was a strong-willed man of principle, but he also had some features characteristic of an insignificant personality, viz, he was suspicious, distrustful, captious, etc. Due to this character of the viceroy quite a few civil officials and military men abandoned their jobs and left the Caucasus.

A lover of ascetic life Muravyov imitated Suvorov in his simple ways of life. He was strict, rude and straightforward. Being utterly pedantic, he demanded that his subordinates should do their assignments thoroughly.

Muravyov had got acquainted with Georgia and the Caucasus as early as Ermolov's times, he had served in the Russian army, located there, but he still had a superficial idea of the Georgian people; neither Georgia recalled the period of his viceroyalty well. Muravyov did not think it necessary to take care of spiritual culture, and it was not fortuitous that the magazine "Tsiskari" was not published, the Italian opera and the Georgian theater stopped functioning due to lack of finances.

Muravyov had not left noticeable traces in the civil rule of the Caucasus. Not a single important law had been adopted, not a single important reform had been carried out



during his rule. During the two years of viceroyalty - Muravyov spent in Tbilisi only six months, he spent the rest of the time in wars and travel about the region. Muravyov tried to restore a half-military government in the Caucasus, and intended to establish the government in Georgia that would be like the government of Central Russia's provinces (gubernias), but he did not have time to realize this plan. The new emperor who ascended the throne of Russia in 1855 needed a new viceroy. Muravyov understood it himself and in June, 1856 asked for the permission to retire.

Nikolai Muravyov wrote several works on history, among them "War for the Caucasus in 1855", also some noteworthy reminiscences, etc.

Bariatski (1855-1862). The third viceroy of the Caucasus, Prince Alexander Bariatski, got acquainted with the region he was to rule as early as in the 30s of the 19th century. The young officer took part in the battles against the mountain peoples of the Northern Caucasus then. In 1835 he was seriously wounded in one of the wars, and having escaped being taken prisoner, he went to St. Petersburg to take a course of treatment. Bariatski had received a special education, but he read a lot and attended lectures at various universities on the subjects interesting for him.

In 1845 Bariatski himself asked the government to return him to the Caucasian army. He together with Vorontsov, took part in the military expedition organized against Shamil, and even distinguished himself, but he was wounded again and was compelled to leave the military service for a few years. In 1847 he was appointed head of the Kabardinian regiment, and then he was made head of the army detachments deployed in Chechnya. This extremely demanding commander who maintained strict discipline was in the know of every trifling problem of his soldiers and officers. He managed to get acquainted with the Russian and foreign literature, concerning the Caucasus, compiled and worked on the strategic projects of the final subjugation of the region. According to Bariatski's plan, instead of occasional battles in the land of the mountain peoples of the Northern Caucasus, it was to be conquered gradually and they were to settle there firmly.

Bariatski refused to marry Count Stolypin's daughter, chosen for him by Nicolas I, and later married a descendant of Erekle II, the niece of Alexandre Orbeliani, his brother Dimitri's daughter, Elisabed Orbeliani. On the initiative of Vorontsov Bariatski was appointed head of the main headquarters of the Caucasian corps in 1853, and his share in the success of the Russian army on the eastern front was large, though the future viceroy did not want to be a subordinate of Muravyov and left his post in 1855.

The following year the dream of the ambitious general came true and Bariatski was appointed highest ruler of the Caucasus which was mainly conditioned by his close relations with the new emperor Alexander II.

Bariatski had no experience of civil government, but he was a gifted man and soon managed to do it. Besides, he obtained more rights from the Emperor than Vorontsov had had in the period of his viceroyalty. Bariatski aspired to retain Vorontsov's "spirit of government" in the Caucasus, but he did not retreat and transformed the whole system of the former viceroy's state machinery. He also established the post of assistant viceroy - Tbilisi Governor-General and appointed General Grigol Orbeliani, a famous poet, well-known in the Caucasian wars, on this post.

Bariatski did a lot in putting in order such a question of agrarian relations as was the marking off of the lands of the gentry in Georgia. He also supervised the preparatory work for the peasants' reform in the Caucasus. On the initiative of the viceroy the Dariali



part of the Georgian military highway was widened and considerably improved. Bariatsinski was the first to raise the question of joining the Black and Caspian Seas by means of a railway. Later on this plan became a reality. The viceroy's daring projects in the spheres of administration, law, also the government reform, carried out by him, were overshadowed by Bariatsinski's military triumph: on August 29, 1859 he occupied the last height of the Murides-aul Gunib. Shamil was compelled to stop resistance and surrender to the victorious viceroy. The long war waged for conquering the Northern Caucasus ended successfully.

Bariatsinski was in the heyday of fame. He received many awards and the rank of a field-marshal.

It was in Bariatsinski's term of office that Samegrelo and Svaneti Principalities were abolished. From 1861 the viceroy practically did not take part in governing the Region, owing to bad health. He lived in Borjomi, in his estate for some time, and then he went abroad for a cure. In 1862 the Emperor satisfied Bariatsinski's request of retirement and appointed Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich Romanov in his place.

Mikhail Nikolaevich. (1862-1881). It was for the first time during the sixty years of the Russian rule in Georgia that a member of the royal family of the Romanovs was made ruler in the Region. Mikhail Nikolaevich was Emperor Alexander's own brother. He had the titles of Adjutant-General and a feldstehkmeister and had worked in the State Council of the Empire before he was sent to the Caucasus.

The newly-appointed viceroy was given exclusive rights, but neither he had the right to conduct independent policy. The grand Duke was also to act within the framework of imperial aims that considered complete subjugation and incorporation of the Caucasus into Russia. Mikhail Nikolaevich achieved considerable success in this respect. The abolition of the Abkhazian principality in 1864 and the final conquest of the Western Caucasus are connected with his name. The grand Duke was presented with a sword adorned with diamonds for this achievement, with the following inscription: "For bringing the Caucasian wars to an end".

On arriving in Tbilisi, the viceroy continued Vorontsov's policy and took the national-cultural or economic peculiarities of the Region into consideration in a way.

In Mikhail Nikolaevich's time a peasant reform was carried out, significant changes were realized in the sphere of justice, in the rural and urban government; a society of spreading Christianity in the Caucasus was founded, the gentry's manorial estate banks were founded in Tbilisi and Kutaisi, in 1866 a Caucasian Museum was opened in Tbilisi, in 1880 the construction of a State (today's opera) theatre began, etc.

Alongside all this the Georgian nation was oppressed by the colonial regime of the autocracy. Even in these comparatively "bearable times" of the liberal ruler the insurgent peasants fighting for land and freedom were still hanged, exiled to Siberia; neither the participants of the artisans' revolt in Tbilisi and members of the secret organization of "narodniks", opposing social injustice, were left unpunished. In 1875 the rebellious village of Khalde in Svaneti was razed to the ground. The population of Abkhazia was found guilty for the anti-Russian revolt in 1877. Russian officials encouraged and assisted the process of the population of Abkhazia and Ajara leaving their country, the so called "muhajiroba".

Mikhail Nikolaevich was made to retire from the post of the viceroy in 1881, two months after the assassination of Alexander II, and was recalled to St. Petersburg.



Dondukov-Korsakov (1882-1890). The new Emperor Alexander III, having ascended the throne, alongside other changes, changed the political status of the Caucasus as well. From this time the highest ruler of the Caucasus again bore the name of a commander-in-chief. His authority and rights also underwent significant changes. Adjutant-General Alexander Dondukov-Korsakov was appointed on this restored post in January, 1882. Dondukov-Korsakov, a descendant of Kalmyks on his mother's side, had received a high juridical education, but after graduating from St. Petersburg University he preferred a military service to working in the sphere of law, and began his military service in the Caucasian army in 1844. The participation in the wars against the Caucasian mountain peoples brought him success in his military career and many awards. The future commander-in-chief fought successfully in the Crimean war as well, but was wounded in one of the battles and left the military service for some time. In the following period his activities were mainly connected with civil work.

In 1881 Dondukov-Korsakov was first Governor-General of Kharkov and then of Odessa, from there he was sent to the Caucasus.

The years of Dondukov-Korsakov's being the commander-in-chief of the Caucasus coincided with the period of political reaction in Russia. The cruelty of reaction was especially felt in the periphery of the Empire and was marked by the strengthening of the colonial oppression.

The commander-in-chief was given a special assignment in the centre of the Empire. He was to return the Caucasus into the region of obedient subjects of the Empire. This was to be achieved on the basis of full Russianizing.

Dondukov-Korsakov with the help of the police and gendarmerie, also the heads of exarchate and the leaders of the educational district of the Caucasus eagerly attacked national languages, cultural and educational centers and organs of periodical press. Georgian magazines and newspapers were closed one after another. Secret police surveillance was kept on Ilia Chavchavadze, the recognized leader of the national-liberation movement. Dimitri Kipiani, the former member of the viceroy's council, and the marshal of nobility was deported to Stavropol in 1886. The process of Georgia's colonization was resumed with greater strength; the religious and national strife among the peoples of the Caucasus was encouraged by the government.

The lover of wine and vodka, Dondukov-Korsakov spent the time in feasting and traveling in a special train about the country. When drunk he made generous promises, though when sober he never bothered to keep them.

Dondukov-Korsakov ruled over the Caucasus till 1890. During his almost ten-year-long rule free word or thinking was persecuted, all aspiration for the national spirit was suppressed and the imperial plan of assimilating the region was steadily realized.

Sheremetyev (1890-1896). The next Russian ruler of the Caucasus Adjutant-General Sergei Sheremetyev can be said to have passed Dondukov-Korsakov's school. He had worked as an assistant of the commander-in-chief from 1884 and had been one of the authors of those anti-national activities that had been carried out so intensively in the whole region then.

The descendant of old boyars, Sheremetyev got acquainted with Georgia when he was still young. During the Crimean war he was enlisted in the Caucasian Corps and took part in taking the Kars fortress together with the viceroy Muravyov. Sheremetyev



also participated in the wars waged to conquer the mountainous regions of the Caucasus that had lasted for scores of years and were a certain kind of firing ground of Russia. Shamil having been defeated, the future commander-in-chief was awarded the rank of the aide de camp to the Emperor and appointed member of the retinue of Alexander II. Sheremetyev commanded a regiment in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878; later on he was head of the Kuban Region and the ataman of the Cossack Army, before Dondukov-Korsakov brought him to Tbilisi and made him his right hand.

Sheremetyev was the commander-in-chief of the Caucasus from 1890 to 1896. He did not leave any noticeable trace in the life of the Region, if we do not take into consideration the fact that during his rule the Surami Tunnel was opened for trains in 1890 and the Abastumani Astrophysics Observatory was built in 1892. While Sheremetyev was Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasus the reactionary activities begun in Dondukov-Korsakov's times did not diminish, the imperial policy of rough national oppression, the persecution and suppression of the Georgian language, culture, historical traditions was continued. In 1894 the gendarmerie destroyed the Georgian students' organization "Georgia's Liberation League", in May, 1896 the publication of Ilia Chavchavadze's "Iveria" was forbidden for eight months, etc.

Golitsin (1896-1905). The last Russian ruler in the Caucasus in the 19th century was Prince Grigori Golitsin. Being a representative of quite a well-known name in the Empire, Golitsin had graduated from the Academy of the General Staff and he had already been a general of infantry before he was appointed commander-in-chief. In spite of the fact that Golitsin had been an active participant of the offensive carried out against the mountain peoples of the Caucasus at the final stage, his biography was not distinguished by great military achievements. He worked in the Caucasian Headquarters from 1861, then he was commander of the household troops of the Finnish regiment, he was member of the retinue of Emperor Alexander II and for some time he was also military governor of the Urals. And in 1896 he was made commander-in-chief of the Caucasus. According to the description of his contemporaries, Golitsin aroused fear in the people around him by his looks. The commander-in-chief strictly punished all those who were against the existing regime, for any manifestation of national and social protest; he tried to suppress social disturbances with hanging people and in this way to restore the colonial order.

Golitsin was a steady follower of the practice of the first commanders-in-chief of the Caucasus and did not employ the representatives of the indigenous population in the state service, the Georgian language was driven out of schools and Church in his times as well as before, printed publications suffered from rigid censorship. Civic life in Georgia was still extremely restricted; the Georgian nation was not allowed to celebrate the jubilee of their renowned son Ilia Chavchavadze, etc.

In 1904 Golitsin, while riding in a carriage, was badly wounded by Armenian terrorists. The commander-in-chief remained alive, but was unable to continue his service. His duties were temporarily performed by General Malama. In 1905 the Caucasus was again declared to be the territory to be ruled by a viceroy, and Count Ilarion Vorontsov-Dashkov was sent to rule over it.

Vorontsov-Dashkov (1905-1915) was one of the biggest landowners of Russia. Many industrial enterprises in different parts of the Empire also belonged to him. A graduate of Moscow University Count Vorontsov-Dashkov began his service as a



cornet in a cavalry regiment, and reached the rank of a cavalry general. Vorontsov-Dashkov had been friends with Emperor Alexander III since his young days.

After Alexander III had ascended the throne the Count was appointed chief manager of horse breeding and minister of the Emperor's palace. At the same time he was a chancellor of the royal and imperial decorations.

In May, 1897 on the day of the coronation of Nicolai II it was the duty of the future viceroy to guarantee order, but a bloody catastrophe happened in Khodinka Valley. Vorontsov-Dashkov was dismissed from work, but he was not punished, the Count was made member of the State Council.

Vorontsov-Dashkov was head of Russia's Red Cross organization in 1904-1905 and made a name for himself as a great philanthropist. In February, 1905 the 68-year-old Count was promoted and appointed viceroy of the Caucasus and Commander-in-chief of the military district of the Region.

Vorontsov-Dashkov did not have great experience in administrative work, but he was not worse than his predecessors in his ability of administrative management. His name is connected with the suppression of the revolutionary movement in the Caucasus; its particular cruelty was demonstrated in Western Georgia.

Among the indigenous nations of the Caucasus Vorontsov-Dashkov's sympathies were with Armenians. Owing to his efforts, the law envisaging the sequestration of the property of the Armenian-Gregorian Church was annulled, Armenian schools were not closed, etc.

Several projects of solving the agrarian problem were worked out with Vorontsov-Dashkov's direct participation. According to the State plan of the system of the peasants' land the plots of land that had been in use before that period were to be given to the peasantry as their private property. To liquidate migration it was decided that those plots of land that the migrants had been cultivating for years should be bought by them, etc. But these projects were not realized. The legislation decided only the question of temporarily acting peasants. The State Deliberative Council affirmed the statute that the buying of the "nadel" was obligatory.

Vorontsov-Dashkov approved of the Kakheti railway project which was mainly financed by the Georgian gentry. The Count supported the idea of establishing elective district councils in the Region. It was in his times that the construction of a 683 km long oil pipeline was finished (1907), a funicular railway was built in Tbilisi (1905), girls' higher educational courses were founded (1909), botanical gardens were opened in Batumi (1912), etc.

The process of Georgia's colonization went on with the consent and assistance of the viceroy. Vorontsov-Dashkov intended to settle half a million Russian colonists in the Southern Caucasus. In the period of his viceroyalty 66 thousand Russians were established only in Tbilisi and Kutaisi Districts. The discord among the population on ethnic and religious basis became frequent, in Baku a massacre of Armenians and Tatars took place. It is true that the status of "a criminal nation" was removed from the Abkhazians, now the Ajara population was accused of treason. About four thousand people were deported from Georgia on the basis of various charges.

When the 1st world war broke out Vorontsov-Dashkov was appointed commander-in-chief of the fighting army of the Caucasus, but the elderly commander-in-chief did not



take part in military operations and supervised only the problems of the rear (the troops were first commanded by General Mishlaevski, and later on by General Yudenich).

The Count was awarded St. George's order for his long service. In July, 1915 he was recalled to the capital and appointed on the post specially established for him. It was the post of "the person being by the side of his Majesty, the Emperor".

Leaving the Caucasus, Vorontsov-Dashkov was self-critical and said that he had not been able to realize all his plans due to the serious war, and among the projects that he had not been able to finish he mentioned in the first place the elective self-government, the legal reform and founding a higher educational institution in Tbilisi.

Nikolai Nikolaevich Romanov (1915-1917). Emperor Nicolai II chose his uncle, grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich Romanov to substitute Vorontsov-Dashkov. The Grand Duke was the highest commander-in-chief of Russia at the time. This distinguished representative of the royal family was adjutant-general, honorary member of the military and engineering academies of Russia and had received a gold weapon with the inscription "For bravery". The Grand Duke's chest was decorated with the awards of Greece, Rumania, Serbia and Chernogoria apart from the highest State orders of Russia

The appointment of Nikolai Nikolaevich on the post of the viceroy of the Caucasus was assumed by the Georgian aristocracy as a special favor of the Emperor to the peoples of the Caucasus, and welcomed the arrival of the new ruler heartily.

The goodwill of the authority was to bring the improvement of living conditions, establishing the national rights to the local population, but in spite of the great competence of the viceroy, he was unable to solve such problems himself. During the year and a half that he was the viceroy of the Caucasus, neither the elective self-government was established, nor were the agrarian sphere and the system of justice put in order. But the population of the Region did not express any particular discontent with the activities of the viceroy.

Nikolai Nikolaevich followed the laws established by the Empire steadily, creating the image of an honest and just ruler for himself. This somewhat liberal man suited the time which drew the last days of the autocracy nearer.

When monarchy in Russia was overthrown in February, 1917, the last viceroy of the Caucasus left his post, went to Petrograd and from there emigrated abroad.

T Twenty Russian rulers were changed during 117 years from the beginning of the 19th century. None of them took a profound interest in the customs of the Georgian people, good or bad sides of their life, their history and culture. "Not a single official here has ever learned anything about our country, they have not had a wish to do it or have felt the necessity of it", Ilia Chavchavadze wrote. And indeed, the commanders-in-chief or the viceroys of the Caucasus having served here for several years, left Georgia unable to say a sentence in Georgian or even to understand it. They considered the whole region to be the arena of gaining wealth and competed with one another in robbing and seizing what the local population had created. "I have seen many grand palaces in Russia, built with the money taken from our country", writes Grigol Orbeliani.

Russian exarchs, the accomplices of civil authorities did the same. They appropriated and took away a great amount of the property of the Georgian Church, valuable icons, crosses, adornments, etc. The Russian governors and hierarchs did not love the country they ruled over, some even hated it. The majority of the officials of justice and administration



were bribe-takers, robbers, drunkards and profligates. They not only disgraced the Russian statehood, but also created a bad impression of Russians as people in general in the eyes of the Georgian people.

The Georgian nation could not put up with the licence and criminal activities of immoral officials, they opposed the cruelty and violence of the colonial regime, but their fight for the national freedom and independence never turned into Russophobia – into hatred for Russia proper or the Russian people.

Georgia had chosen Russia - the country, having the same religion, as her rescuer and protector, but this protector turned out to be an oppressor and conqueror like our historical enemies – Persia and the Ottoman Empire. The tsarism abolished the state throne of the Bagrationis' - Kartli and Kakheti, abolished kingdom of Imereti and conquered Western Georgia. It resulted in the destruction of the Georgian statehood; Georgia, divided into regions and districts, became part of the Russian Empire. The Russian government was established in the country, alien and incomprehensible for the Georgian people, it did not suit their national traditions and way of life. The military occupation regime, established at the beginning of the 19th century, had not practically changed during the existence of the autocracy.

The establishing of the imperial rule was accompanied by the oppression of the indigenous population, their humiliation and disregard of their rights. The Georgian language was driven out from the administrative bodies and courts of justice. Later on it was driven out from schools and church as well. The Georgian Church also found itself in hard conditions. It was deprived of autocephaly and was subordinated to Russia's synod. The Tsar's government conducted a system of measures that undermined the originality of the Georgian nation, hastened the process of its Russianizing and incorporating into the Empire.

According to the instructions of the Empire, the authorities of the Caucasus followed the principle of "Divide and rule" in their activities, they sowed enmity among the tribes the Georgian nation consisted of – Megreles, Svans, Ajarians and others, opposed the local Christians and Moslems to one another, made treacherous plans of removing Georgia's oldest parts Abkhazia and Ajara from her and aspired to realize them.

The settling of alien people on the territory of Georgia from time to time served the purpose of degenerating the Georgian people and their disappearance as a nation in the long run. It was Tsitsianov who had first begun this practice. He had moved several thousands of Armenians to Kartli and Kakheti from neighboring khanates. In 1817-1819 German settlers were brought to Tbilisi, Bolnisi, Sartichala and other places from Russia and were given best plots of land. In 1829 over 6000 families of Christian Armenians and Greeks from the Ottoman Empire were settled in the territories of Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki and Tsalka. Intensive colonization went on the Black Sea Coast alongside assisting the Muhajirs leave Abkhazia and Ajara.

Russian military colonies and settlements of Russian sectarians, dissenters from the Russian Church, frequently cropped up on the Georgian land.

The tsar's government realized demographic expansion mostly in the peripheries of Georgia – Javakheti, Borchalo, Lore, Saingulo and Abkhazia. By means of killing the Georgian spirit and gathering the alien element the tsarism multiplied the forces – supporters of the Empire.



The colonial policy of the autocracy had another negative result as well; viz. the abolition of the statehood of their country and the severity of national oppression caused the Georgian nation's estrangement from the state. The united Georgian consciousness was broken. And the humiliation of the Church and its transformation in the Russian way shook the foundation of faith. Lacking national consciousness, having no religion any more, unbelieving and disposed against the state, this mass of people turned out to be a fertile soil for developing a cosmopolitan social-democratic ideology which was the cause that Georgia did not follow the way of natural development and in future she found herself in danger many times.

Having conquered Georgia politically, the Tsarism headed for her economic enslavement. Instead of founding industrial enterprises and developing them on the spot, Russia used Georgia's natural resources in her interests; she carried raw materials from there for nothing, processed them in their factories and plants and sent them back to sell. The realization of this principle of colonization turned Georgia into a consumer country, not a producing one, it became a cheap base of cheap and good raw materials for the Empire, apart from this she (Georgia) had the function of a market where Russian products of industry were to be sold.

Alongside robbing the conquered country the government aspired to increase the State property. The property of the Bagrationi kings and princes was given to the State Treasury from the very start. The treasury also got hold of the enormous property, taken from the Georgian recalcitrant nobility and the Church. The Russian rulers of the Caucasus got hold of and appropriated thousands of hectares of land both in Western and Eastern Georgia, etc.

The officials of Tsarism tried to inculcate the idea that the incorporation of Georgia into Russia was more a great sacrifice on her part, that she had not profited by it. This wrong and premeditated point of view was expressed in the Russian historiography later on. In reality, Georgia and the Caucasus were not a burden for Russia; on the contrary, they brought her additional income, and were a serious source for the increase of her budget.

In spite of the imperial purpose of the Tsar's government the incorporation into the Russian Empire had positive results for Georgia too. There was no more the danger of aggression on the part of neighboring Moslem countries, endless incursions of the Lezghins had stopped, the country's isolation was over, and selling people as slaves and feudal internal wars were done away with; the circle that had surrounded our country for centuries was broken and a chance of communicating with other countries reappeared. The liquidation of princedoms (*satavados*), the abolition of serfdom and the bourgeois reforms, assisting the country's progressive development, created favorable conditions for Georgia's social and economic progress. It is true that the roads and railway were constructed for the needs of the Empire, but the fact was that it was done. New settlements appeared, the number of the population increased and the communication between different parts of the country became steadier. Georgia got acquainted with the Russian culture, the achievements of the Western civilization, etc.

The aggressive wars of the Tsarism resulted in the fact that the Georgian lands, occupied by the Turks before, were returned to Georgia, and the territorial integrity of Georgia its unification became possible. By annexing the Georgian lands Russia got the better of her



adversaries in the region – Iran and Turkey, and broadened the frontiers of her Empire. As for Georgia, this important event had a practical significance too, apart from the restoration of the historical justice. She got rid of the long-term separatism, and began to follow the road of politically united national consolidation.

It is true it did not coincide with the political plans of the autocracy, but the Georgian nation managed to gain the territorial integrity, social and economic progress, instead of the taken liberty, during several scores of years of Russia's rule in Georgia. The positive role of the metropolis in the life of the conquered country was exhausted at this stage. The following domination of the Tsarism in Georgia acquired a negative character on one side and it became an obstacle of the nation's progressive development.

If we sum up all the aforesaid, we can make a conclusion: the positive results of Russia's domination in Georgia did not nullify the negative effects of the colonial policy of the autocracy. That was the reason for the Georgian nation's desperate struggle to restore their statehood and return the freedom that had been taken away from them.

The Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921)

The System of Governmental Management

On May 26, 1918, a new era began in the life of the Georgian nation. National statehood, ceased in the nineteenth century, was resumed in the political form of a democratic republic. The first government of the newly established state was formed on a coalition principle. An influential Social Democrat, Noe Ramishvili, was appointed head of the government and the minister of home affairs. The members of the cabinet of ministers were as follows: Grigol Giorgadze (the minister of defense), Akaki Chkhenkeli (the minister of foreign affairs) Noe Khomeriki (the minister of agriculture). All of them were Social Democrats. Giorgi Zhuruli (the minister of finances, trade and industry), Giorgi Laskhishvili (the minister of education), Shalva Meskhishvili (the minister of justice) were Social-Federalists, and Ivane Lortkipanidze (the minister of roads) was a Social-Revolutionary.

In June of 1918, a change took place in the government. Noe Zhordania, the leader of the Social-Democratic Party, took the post of the head of the government. Noe Ramishvili retained the post of the minister of internal affairs. Evgeni Gegechkori (a Social Democrat) became the minister of foreign affairs.

This change did not violate the coalition principle of the formation of the executive body of the government. This principle guaranteed wide participation of the political spectrum in the process of building the state.

The initial local government bodies were the commissariats of provinces, regions and districts, but dividing the country into provinces (*gubernias*) was soon rejected. The posts of commissars were abolished too. Self-government district councils were established on the basis of elections. These were elected district-councils based on the multiparty principle with their own boards of administration. A reform of the city self-government

was also carried out and deliberative councils of cities and towns with their boards of administration were established. The workers, peasants and soldiers' councils were deprived of the function of governing. This function was to be performed by the regional elective district councils and town deliberative councils. Thus, the local self-government within the framework of its competence performed the local government as well. Only a court of law had the right to annul the decisions of the elective district councils and deliberative councils.

Georgia's National Council was given the status of the supreme legislative body of the country. From October of 1918, it was filled with additional members and called Georgia's Parliament. The National Council and Parliament of Georgia were not elected by general elections. That was the reason that preparations to elect a Constituent Assembly — the supreme legislative body expressing the people's will — began as soon as the state independence was declared. The Constituent Assembly was to become the political foundation of renovated Georgia. Its duty was to work out the country's constitution and to define the form of the Georgian State.

The assembly was to have 130 deputies. All the citizens of the country had the right to vote, women among them, starting from age 20.

The elections of the Constituent Assembly took place in February 1919. The elections were general, equal, secret, direct, and held on a proportional system. Fifteen political organizations took part in the election campaign. The electorate consisted of 2,000,000 people. More than 60% of the population who had the right to vote took part in balloting. Only the Bolsheviks boycotted the elections, but they were unable to wreck them.

The Socialist-Democratic Party won the elections by a wide margin. They obtained 109 mandates. The National-Democratic and Socialist-Federalist Parties each had eight deputies in the Assembly; the Socialist-Revolutionaries got five places.

The Constituent Assembly of Georgia, with its speaker — Nikoloz (Karlo) Chkheidze, began to work on March 12, 1919. At the very first meeting, the Assembly confirmed "The Independence Act of Georgia" adopted by the National Council on May 26, 1918. This supreme legislative body confirmed the new government of the Republic, which this time consisted only of the members of the victorious party — the Social Democrats. Noe Zhordania retained the post of the head of the government. Noe Ramishvili became the minister of internal affairs, defense and education, E. Gegechkori was made the minister of Foreign affairs and justice, K. Kandelaki became the minister of finances, N. Khomeriki got the portfolio of the minister of agriculture and labor. Later on the ministry of defense (military ministry) became an independent ministry and the post of the deputy-chairman of the government was established. Grigol Lortkipanidze was appointed on both these posts.

An important event in the process of building a national state was working out the state symbols of the independent Georgian State. In consultation with the famous historian Ivane Javakhishvili, Iakob Nikoladze made the flag of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and Ioseb Scharlemahn made the state emblem. In September of 1918, the National Council confirmed a tricolor (dark-red, black, white) flag as a state flag and White Giorgi with seven suns fighting a dragon as the state emblem. Kote Potskhverashvili's "Dideba" ("Glory") became the state anthem.

The authorities of the Democratic Republic began to give a national character to state bodies and schools. The Georgian language was declared the state language. The National Council published temporary regulations defining citizenship of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, and in May 1920, the Constituent Assembly adopted the law of citizenship.

Serious attention was paid to the legal reform. Revolutionary tribunals and various investigation commissions were abolished. A reorganization of the institutions of arbitrators and jurors was carried out. Arbitral and district courts were established. A military court existed separately. In July of 1919, the supreme legal body of the Democratic Republic of Georgia-Senate – was established. The Constituent Assembly elected and confirmed its members. The posts of judges and jurors were also elective. This conditioned a certain independent character of the legal system.

The Democratic Republic of Georgia was established at the time when World War I was still going on. The government was obliged to define the country's attitude towards this most significant event. This was reflected in the "Act of Independence" in which Georgia declared permanent neutrality in international warfare.

Neutrality did not seem very real in such a complicated geopolitical region as the Southern Caucasus was, but it expressed Georgia's peaceful aspirations.

The declaration of neutrality would not be a sufficient guarantee for the sovereignty of the newly created republic; therefore, the strengthening of the defense potential of the country became one of the main objectives of the government. In a very short time, a legal basis was prepared: laws about the organization of people's guards and a regular army of the Republic were published and the regulations about the military service and forming a regular army were confirmed. All male citizens from twenty to forty years of age were to do military service in the regular army. The army that was gathered in the case of expected military danger or war presented a certain reserve.

Georgia had numerous generals and officers who had served in the Russian army and gained great experience in her wars. Their great majority began serving their motherland without hesitation, ready to do their share in building the Georgian military forces. However, the reformation of the regular army was done in a hurry due to lack of finances, complications in foreign affairs, and military attacks (the war with Armenia, defending the country from the attacks of Turks and Denikin, the aggression of Soviet Russia). There were some drawbacks too. However, it still became possible to form a twenty to thirty thousand-man army that was efficient and mobile. A military school, founded in Tbilisi, took care of bringing up officers of lower rank.

The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia carried out the agrarian reform in a comparatively short time. This reform was of great importance. The peasantry's dream came true, they became owners of Land.

Before the country had her own monetary-financial system, the paper money of the Transcaucasian Commissariat remained in circulation. It was printed in Tbilisi. In July 1919, the emission of the republican paper money began by the decree of the Constituent Assembly. The Georgian temporary paper money was unable to be a substitute for hard currency, but allowed the normalization of the budget, more or less.

In December 1919, the State Bank of the Democratic Republic of Georgia was founded with I. Lortkipanidze at its head. The bank was built on new principles. It was subject to



the Constituent Assembly. The supreme legislative body elected its boards of directors and supervisors. The whole profit of the State Bank belonged to the Exchequer.

The reformation of the State apparatus of the Republic was carried out successfully. Georgia rejected the dictatorship of proletariat established in Russia. She did not accept the Soviet model and chose a democratic way of development that separated the legislative, executive, and legal power from one another. The political system was based on pluralism and liberal multiparty principles. The citizens' equality before law and other democratic liberties, characteristic of a law-governed state, were established. All this was distinctly reflected in Georgia's constitution, confirmed by the Constituent Assembly in February 1921.

The main law of the Democratic Republic of Georgia followed the model of Western states. This constitution did not act for a long time, but it was still of great historical significance. This legal document was clearly of the same level as the constitutions of its contemporary advanced countries; it showed a high legal and political culture of its compilers and revealed the democratic character of the Georgian state.

The State power and Opposition

The Georgian Social-Democrats (Mensheviks) were the leading political power in the Democratic Republic of Georgia during the whole period of its existence. The leaders of this revolutionary organization had acquired certain experience in parliamentary life by participating in Russia's State Council. As for the practice of governing the country, they got it while working in the Transcaucasian Commissariat and the *Seim*. However, the Social Democrats' experience did not turn out to be sufficient for the political leadership of the independent country. The more so as the aims of the Georgian followers of Marxism had not envisaged that Georgia would become an independent country. Before coming into power, the Social Democrats had no plan for building a national state. It was not fortuitous either that Georgia's Social Democratic Workers' Party was formed as an independent political organization only in November of 1918, after Georgia's statehood had been restored.

The influence of the Social Democrats on the population in the period before the restoration of Georgia's state independence greatly exceeded the authority of the other political organizations of the country. That was the reason that they found themselves at the head of the newly established state unconditionally. Winning the elections of the local self-governing bodies (elective district councils) and the Constituent Assembly turned this political force into the ruling party officially.

This showed the Georgian Mensheviks, faithful to the socialist teachings, the necessity of revising their theoretical ideas and party program. It became clear to Noe Zhordania and his party members that economically backward Georgia was not yet ready for a socialist experiment. Therefore, the government did not make socialism its practical aim in the near future; they declared it a remote objective, a historical prospect. To reach socialism Georgia had first to make a necessary step, viz. she was to pass the capitalist stage of development: alongside strengthening the local bourgeoisie, a middle stratum of society was to be formed, etc.



The leaders of the first republic of Georgia were not satisfied with the formation of political democracy and market economy in the country. They tried to give a social character to the newly established country, to defend the interests of laborers, especially those of the working class.

The ideology and the policy of action of the Social-Democratic government were based upon the democratic socialism of the European type. It is noteworthy that the leaders of the Second International (K. Kautski, Wanderwelde, R. MacDonald, P. Renodel and others) who arrived in Tbilisi in the autumn of 1920 acknowledged Georgia to be a living incarnation of this ideology.

The assessment of the Georgian opposition was quite different.

Four main parties functioned in Georgia in the period before the resumption of Georgian statehood and during the years of the existence of the Georgian Democratic Republic. It is true that the number of the political subjects participating in the elections for the supreme legislative body was much larger, but only the Social-Democratic, Social-Federalist, Socialist-Revolutionary and National-Democratic parties obtained the mandates of deputies. Accordingly, besides the majority of the Social Democrats, the parliamentary factions were made up by the deputies representing these organizations.

The National-Democrats (S. Kedia, N. Nikoladze, G. Gvazava and others) were the main opposition force in the Constituent Assembly. This right-wing party found the policies of the Social Democrats of building the state defective. They pointed out the mistakes in strengthening the defense of the country, in foreign policy and other issues. They demanded that the private property, the rights of proprietors be protected, and a wide scope be given to free initiative.

The National-Democratic opposition was businesslike and constructive. Against the background of sharp criticism of the ruling party, the National-Democrats pointed out alternative ways and means of solving problems. They demanded that the government follow a real national trend instead of permanent hesitation and revolutionary policy. They advised the government to share the experience of the West — to introduce evolutionary democracy and carry out moderate economic reforms.

The Social Federalists (S. Pirtskhalava, G. Laskhishvili, Sh. Nutsubidze and others) and Revolutionary-Democrats (L. Shengelaya, I. Gobechia, G. Natadze and others) presented a left-wing opposition.

The Federalists thought that the policy that the government had chosen was more suitable for radicals than social democrats. They said that the ruling party of social democrats had established a bourgeois-democratic system in Georgia and avoided giving it a socialist character.

The Federalists did not believe that it would be possible to establish socialism only within the boundaries of Georgia. However, they still demanded that a firm foundation be laid for it from the very outset: that the socialization of land be carried out in the agrarian sphere, that the government pay more attention to collective enterprises, generalization of economy, the development of a cooperative movement, etc.

As for the relations with foreign countries, the Federalist Party supported the policy of close relationship with different social-democratic countries.

The party of the Socialist-Revolutionaries criticized the government for diverging from the socialist practice. They aspired to the social broadening of the revolution, the



collectivization of labor and property, declaring the land, forests, water and the deposits of ore the property of people. The Socialist-Revolutionaries asserted that the state and local democratic bodies should interfere in the country's economic life more actively; workers' control should be established upon enterprises, taxes should be mainly paid by wealthy classes, etc.

The relations of the ruling party and the opposition seldom violated the norms of decent behavior. They suited the principles of pluralism and were mainly expressed by peaceful rivalry.

As for the Bolshevik Party, it cannot be considered an opposition. This political organization served the interests of Soviet Russia in Georgia. The Bolsheviks were enemies of the independence of the country, arranged armed insurrections and pursued the policy of causing permanent instability. The Georgian Bolsheviks did not want to change the government; they wanted to overthrow the sovereign democratic republic. They achieved their aim in February, 1921.

The Home Policy of the Democratic Republic of Georgia

The National Question

Georgia, which had belonged to Russia since the nineteenth century, regained its sovereign statehood in May of 1918. It meant that this whole territory was now under the jurisdiction of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. The Democratic Republic of Georgia received a bad demographic heritage from the tsarist government. The number of people of other nationalities had greatly increased due to the colonial policy of the autocracy. Georgia had become a multi-national country, ethnographically variegated. According to the 1897 census, the percentage of Georgians had decreased from 74.9% to 69.4% of the whole population. The situation was also complicated by the fact that the non-Georgian population mainly lived in the borderline territories of Georgia, and influenced by foreign forces, some of their representatives revealed separatist aspirations.

Georgia's social-democratic government chose the policy of tolerance concerning the non-Georgian population. The attitude of the oppositional parties towards the national minorities was also the same. The national minorities were given a possibility of leading a harmonious life together with Georgians and of free Social-economic and cultural development in the newly created state. It was emphasized in "The Act of Independence" that Georgia guaranteed the civil and political rights of all her citizens that she would create conditions of free development for all the nations living on her territory. All this was fully reflected in the constitution of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, in which a separate (fourteenth) chapter was dedicated to the rights of national minorities.

The rights of national minorities in the Democratic Republic of Georgia were both acknowledged and protected. Not a single nation or nationality suffered from oppression on ethnic grounds in Georgia in 1918-1921. The promises declared in legal acts were



consecutively realized in practice. Each ethnic minority living in Georgia had their own national council to supervise their national affairs. Ethnic political organizations or unions (e.g. Armenian Dashnaktsiutun, Moslems' group, the Hellenic Democratic group, etc.) worked without restriction. 80 Armenian, 60 Russian, 31 Tatar schools were funded from the State budget. A German gymnasium was founded in Tbilisi; foundations were laid for elementary education in the Abkhazian and Ossetian languages.

The representatives of minorities were members of Georgia's National Council. Azerbaijani, Armenian, Russian, Greek, German, Abkhazian and Osset citizens had deputies' mandates of the Social-Democratic party in Georgia's Supreme Legislative Body – the Constituent Assembly, etc.

In spite of the purposeful policy of the Government the process of non-Georgians' integration in the Democratic Republic of Georgia did not develop smoothly and caused conflicts.

The Abkhazian question was extremely acute

Now the autocracy was overthrown, Abkhazia, called the Sukhumi Region, was part of the Kutaisi Province (*Gubernia*). That was the reason that a provisional committee of the local government, established in Sukhumi in March 1917, was subjected to Ozacom (A Special Transcaucasian Committee) subordinated to Russia's Provisional government. Abkhazia presented a special interest for Ottoman Turkey, the Union of Caucasian Mountain Peoples, the Bolshevik and the White Guard Russia. As for the social-political movement of Abkhazia itself, several trends appeared in it. One was of pro-Osmanli orientation, another sympathized with the Union of Mountain Peoples, and the third was in sympathy with Bolshevik slogans. There was also a group that wanted Abkhazia to be an independent state. As for the whole Samurazaqano, part of Gudauta peasantry and Sukhumi workers demanded integration with Georgia.

In September 1917 "the mountain people of the Sukhumi Region" – Abkhazians integrated into the South-Eastern Union of the Cossack army, the Caucasian highlanders and the free peoples of the steppes, united in Vladikavkaz. However, the state authority of the union did not affect the Sukhumi Region and it was limited only by national, cultural, and political competence.

In December 1917 Gagra and Bzib districts were incorporated into the Sukhumi Region of the Kutaisi Province by the decree of the Transcaucasian Commissariat. This act officially acknowledged that Abkhazia was part of Georgia and Transcaucasia. Georgian politicians had planned to give Abkhazia wide self-government even before Georgia's state independence was declared. The pro-Georgian wing of the Abkhazian people's council shared this point of view, but its pro-Turkish majority opposed it.

On February 9, 1918, an agreement was reached between the Abkhazian People's Council and the executive committee of Georgia's National Council that envisioned the restoration of the territorial integrity of Abkhazia. Herewith, the political system of united Abkhazia was to be determined by the Constituent Assembly of Abkhazia, elected on a democratic basis. It is true that the agreement had no judicial force, yet the conclusion of this agreement meant giving autonomy to Abkhazia.



In spring of 1918, the situation in Abkhazia became extremely strained. Initiated and supported by Soviet Russia, Bolshevik detachments occupied Sukhumi, dispersed the Abkhazian People's Council, established military revolutionary committees and seized power in the whole of Abkhazia and Samurzaqano. The Abkhazian People's Council was unable to resist the Bolsheviks' raids with their own forces and turned to Georgia's National Council and the Seim of Transcaucasia for help. The pro-Ottoman group of the Council tried to end the Bolsheviks' violence with the help of Turkey.

The government of Transcaucasia sent military detachments under the command of the head of People's Guards V. Jugeli and Colonel Koniashvili to restore order in Abkhazia. Abkhazia was cleared of Bolsheviks within a month's time.

After the independence of Georgia was restored, and in spite of their anti-Georgian disposition, the Abkhazian People's Council decided to send a friendly address to Georgia's National Council. It asked them to help Abkhazia to establish state power there and to leave the detachment of the Georgian guards that was in Sukhumi at that time at the disposal of the Abkhazian People's Council.

In June 1918 negotiations between the delegation of the Abkhazian People's Council and Georgia's Government began. They ended on June 11. At these negotiations, an agreement was concluded. According to this document, Abkhazia remained a component part of Georgia and it was given complete internal autonomy. Georgia's Government took it upon themselves to render military and economic aid to Abkhazia. The political organization of Abkhazia was to be decided by the congress of the whole population, convened on democratic principles.

Soon the situation in Abkhazia became unstable again. The Bolsheviks, supported in the region by the detachments of "*Kiarazelni*," began a new offensive from Gagra. They occupied Gudauta and approached Akhali Athoni. They aimed at removing Abkhazia from Georgia and making it part of Soviet Russia. This time armed formations of Kuban Cossacks fought alongside the Bolsheviks.

At the repeated request of the Abkhazian People's Council and according to the agreement of June 11, 1918, Georgia's military force, commanded by General G. Mazniashvili, was sent to Sukhumi. G. Mazniashvili was appointed General-Governor and head of the Sukhumi garrison. The Georgian detachments together with a hurriedly formed 300-man Abkhazian cavalry unit drove the insurgent Bolsheviks away from Abkhazia. The same fate was shared by the one thousand-man Turkish force landed from Batumi in the environs of the River Kodori. The civilian population, damaged during the military actions, received compensation from the Georgian Government.

With the purpose of coordinating activities, a representative of Georgia's Democratic Republic worked in Sukhumi, and the Minister of Abkhazian affairs worked with the government of Georgia. In spite of all this, the separatist wing of the Abkhazian People's Council disposed the local population against the Democratic Republic of Georgia. The whole population of Abkhazia did not support the Council, for it expressed only the wish of the Abkhazian people and did not take into consideration the other peoples living there. In August 1918, the People's Council disbanded. A provisional council, founded by means of reorganization and made up by the representatives of different nations, was to immediately organize a governing body that enjoyed all rights and expressed the interests of all nations and nationalities living in Abkhazia.



Since, due to the international situation no danger of the Turkish aggression was expected, the anti-Georgian wing of the People's Council turned towards the army of volunteers, encamped in the Kuban Region, and asked General Alekseev for help. The latter used this circumstance as a reason of unjust claims on Georgia, and tried to exert influence on the newly formed Georgian State by diplomatic and other means. The army of volunteers widely used Russian clerical circles and Russians' People's Council, acting in Abkhazia, against Georgia.

In October 1918, the Georgian Government stopped an attempted political coup in Sukhumi. Its aim was to take Abkhazia away from Georgia. On October 10, the Abkhazian People's Council was dismissed. The government did not allow the disintegration of the country and destroyed the anti-state force. Nevertheless, this did not stop the political process in the region. The Sukhumi Deliberative Council and the town and village elective councils functioned, political organizations and trade unions of various establishments were active, the newspaper "Apsni" was published in the Abkhazian language, and what is more, the central election committee was organized. It was to guarantee the formation of the People's Council of Abkhazia by means of democratic elections.

The legislative organ of the Abkhazian Autonomy was to consist of 40 members. The right to vote was given not only to the citizens of Georgia, living in Abkhazia, but to all the people of the full legal age, living in the region. This was confirmed by the regulation of elections of Georgia's Parliament.

The People's Council of Abkhazia was elected on February 13, 1919. It was both multi-party and multi-national. An essential part of the Abkhazian population also took an active part in the elections of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia which took place at the same time with the elections to the People's Council.

A. Emkhvari was elected chairman of the People's Council of Abkhazia. He very soon became head of Abkhazia's Commissariat (government). V. Shervashidze, the former chairman, became chairman of the Council.

There was no unanimity in the Council, especially in regard to Georgia, and the representatives of different parties had different positions.

On March 20, 1919 the People's Council with the absolute majority of votes adopted "The Act of Abkhazia's Autonomy". Its first article said, "Abkhazia is part of the Democratic Republic of Georgia as its autonomous unit".

The Constituent Assembly of Georgia approved the Act. By the end of 1920, the constitutional commission of Georgia's supreme legislative body worked out "the project of the regulations of governing the Abkhazian Autonomy", confirmed by the Constituent Assembly together with Georgia's constitution on February 21, 1921. It is emphasized in the regulations that "Abkhazia from the River Mekhadiri to the River Enguri, from the Black Sea littoral to the Caucasian Range is considered to be the indivisible part of the Republic of Georgia and it autonomously governs its internal affairs within these borders". As for the Constitution, it legalized the following: The indivisible part of the Republic of Georgia – Abkhazia (Sukhumi Region) – is given the right of the autonomous governing of local affairs.



The Ossetian Issue

The Ossetian issue presented a serious challenge for the Democratic Republic of Georgia. The absolute majority of Ossets who had migrated to Georgia from the Northern Caucasus in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lived in the villages of the Inner Kartli (Shida Kartli) with the status of migrants. They received this right with the agreement of the Georgian kings and feudal lords at a certain time. The Ossets took the land from the landowners on lease and paid respective recompense. After the serf ownership was abolished, the Osset migrants became the actual owners of the plots of land on which they had worked for years, but were unable to become real owners of this property. Besides, they felled trees in forests and voluntarily appropriated new plots of land and settled their descendants there. The migrant Ossets occasionally had conflicts with Georgian landowners and peasantry because of this. The overthrowing of the Tsarism and the breaking of imperial structures strained and complicated the situation still more.

No feeling of responsibility for the Georgian State remained in the historical memory of the Ossets. What is more, a kind of fear was born among them of the newly established Democratic Republic of Georgia, for the state system threatened to change their usual style of life.

The Ossets, living compactly on the territory of Georgia, had expressed their aspiration to self-determination as early as in the period of the government of the Transcaucasian commissariat, and entrusted the Ossets' National Council with fulfilling the task. The Ossets decided to establish a separate elective administrative-territorial unit at first. Later they demanded that the political autonomy of South Ossetia be established within the borders of Georgia. These claims were unreal, for there has never been a precedent of any country allowing part of a non-dominant nation (not a title nation) living on its territory and having a motherland elsewhere, to establish a political unit on its territory. This was the case with the Ossets as well. They had their motherland in the Northern Caucasus; therefore, nobody would legalize their new state inside the Georgian State.

The Georgian government offered a cultural autonomy to loyally disposed Ossets. In 1919, the question of the formation of Ossetian villages into one administrative unit and establishing an elective self-government for the Ossets was discussed. The Java District and not the South Ossetian Region were chosen for it with the centre in Tskhinvali as the Ossets' National council wanted.

The appearance of the term "South Ossetia" is connected with the period of Russia's domination in Georgia, but it did not denote any ethno-political or ethno-historical unit and was used only to designate the Ossetian communities living on the southern slopes of the Caucasian Range.

The Georgian government and the Georgian public opinion were against this artificial concept and did not use it. A more radical group, with much more aggressive aims, existed among the Ossets' movement besides the National Council. They tried to realize their aims by using violence. The Osset Bolsheviks with separatist goals and groups of rebels connected with them, together with the Georgian Communist leaders, fought to separate "South Ossetia" from Georgia and incorporate it into Soviet Russia. They arranged three armed insurrections in Georgia under the leadership and with the assistance of Russia's Bolshevik leaders in 1918-1920.



The 1920 Osset rebellion had negative results. The RCP (B) regional committee of the Caucasus was organized and led this rebellion. The rebels slaughtered soldiers of the People's Guards, killed representatives of the local administration and government, robbed and sacked many Georgian families.

An Ossets' guerilla detachment set out from the Northern Caucasus to join the rebels. They crossed the Roki and Mamison Passes and occupied Tskhinvali after a fight. A specially formed South Ossetian Revolutionary Committee seized power. They declared the establishment of the Soviet power from Oni to Dusheti on June 8. The Revolutionary Committee wired the Kremlin about the victory informed them about the wish of South Ossetian workers to be incorporated into Russia.

The leaders of the rebellion were getting ready to wage war against Gori, blockade the Surami tunnel and hoist the Red Banner of the Communism over the whole Georgia. Serious danger threatened Georgia's state independence.

The government had not shown special severity against Ossets' rebellions in previous years, preferring to settle the problem by peaceful means, but when the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity was encroached upon, it was the duty of the Democratic Republic of Georgia to defend the freedom and independence that had been gained by the long struggle of the Georgian people.

The government charged several detachments of the People's Guards and Regular Army with the task of stabilizing the situation. The rebellion was suppressed. Georgia's jurisdiction in the region was fully restored. The sources say that the Commander of the Guards displayed too much cruelty, but he did not perpetrate the Ossetian people's genocide. The rebels were punished for their anti-state, criminal actions and not because they belonged to the Ossetian ethnos. It is true, that part of the Ossetian population, mainly the members of armed units, migrated to North Ossetia, but those Ossets who had not taken part in the rebellion and were loyal to the state did not suffer any punishment. They remained the citizens of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, enjoying equal and full rights, though the question of their autonomy and local self-government was removed from the agenda.

Moslem Georgia

The name of Moslem Georgia was given to the southwestern regions and provinces of historic Georgia that had been seized by the Ottoman Empire at one time or another. The indigenous Christian population living on these territories was made to embrace Islam. Compulsory Islamization, the inner emigrational and assimilatory processes, living in the administrative-territorial space of another country, caused the alienation of this population from Georgia. In the nineteenth century, as a result of Russo-Turkish wars, the lands of Moslem Georgia were incorporated into the Russian state, and in essence, rejoined its mother country, Georgia.

The Bolshevik government of Soviet Russia gave Batumi, Kars, and Artaani Regions to Germany's ally, Ottoman Turkey, according to the Brest peace treaty of 1918 on condition that the local population should be able "to establish a new system in agreement with neighboring countries, especially with Ottoman Turkey".



The Transcaucasian Federative Republic established in this period, found that decision illegal, but was unable to defend the above-mentioned regions and Turkey occupied not only those territories but seized Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki districts as well. In June 1918, Turkey compelled the Democratic Republic of Georgia to make this "acquisition" legal for Turks by a new peace-treaty. Following Osmanli occupation 60,000 people left their dwelling-places and moved to the Georgian districts bordering these territories (20,000 people left Batumi).

The government of Ottoman Turkey conducted a referendum in southwestern Georgia and obtained desirable results, but owing to being defeated in World War I, it was compelled to withdraw its troops from the occupied territory in haste. Moslem Georgia was subjected to the control of the victorious states of the Entente, viz. that of Great Britain. Batumi and the Batumi Region were subordinated to the English.

Armenia and Azerbaijan contended with the Democratic Republic of Georgia for historic Meskhethi. Ottoman Turkey also tried to retain its influence there. The local begs also had some claims – their separatist movement started in 1917 as soon as Tsarism was overthrown. The begs were supported sometimes by Ottoman Turkey, sometimes by Denikin, and sometimes by the command of the English army deployed in the Caucasus.

The intentions of the population were also varied in this unstable situation. Some were of pro-Osmanli orientation, others supported the idea of being incorporated into Georgia, the Armenians were looking forward to joining the Ararat Republic, etc. Hostilities on ethnic, religious and political grounds sometimes turned into armed opposition and blood was shed.

As early as in November of 1918, before the Ottomans left Akhaltsikhe and the town was returned to the Democratic Republic of Georgia, the local begs had established the so-called Akhaltsikhe government with the minister-president Omar Paik and intended to turn Akhaltsikhe-Akhalkalaki Region into a separate canton. The military forces of the Georgian Democratic Republic put an end to this adventure at once. General B. Makashvili, appointed general-governor of the region, arrested Omar Paik and began to establish order in the town. The government of Georgia avoided aggravating the situation and set the impostor president free, but was unable to get reconciled with the begs. The latter demanded that their feudal privileges be left to them, and this contradicted the course of the democratic socialism established in the state.

On December 25, 1918, Georgia's Parliament officially addressed the inhabitants of Moslem Georgia and promised to give this region autonomy. With this act the Parliament confirmed the resolution, adopted a year before.

The leaders of the Democratic Republic of Georgia were unable to fully understand the specificity of Moslem Georgia. It is true that the court system, founded on the laws of Sharia, had remained in force before the autonomous rule was established in the region, etc. but a number of agrarian-social reforms, or mistakes made in administrative management increased discontent of the part of the population, especially its upper stratum. Bey-aghalars, khojas (servants of the cult), etc. took advantage of this situation and spread vicious propaganda against Georgia.

A small group of Moslems, encouraged by Ottoman emissaries, sent a petition to the Sultan and asked to be incorporated into the Ottoman Empire as the Meskhethi autonomy.



In January 1919, the so-called republic of southern-western Caucasus or the Kars Republic was founded whose provisional government was headed by Ibraim Bey. A seventy-member mejlis was formed, etc. One of the influential leaders of the newly established "state" was Server-Beg Athabag. This last descendant of Samtskhe athabags intended to incorporate into the "Kars Republic" the territories of Georgia and Armenia (mainly the sanjaqs of Kars, Artaani and Batumi) that were in the zone of the English protection at that time.

At the end of January 1919, Server-Beg collected about 12,000 men — Ottoman, Russian White Guard, and English officers among them — and organized a rebellion. The rebels occupied Akhaltsikhe on February 11, dispersed the Georgian administration, and seized power. This insolent and conceited Beg sent a note to Tbilisi and proposed that the territorial frontiers between Georgia and the "Kars Republic" should be within the 1828 Russo-Turkish borders.

Both the Ottoman Turkey and the command of the British Army promised support and assistance to the separatists. The leaders of the "Kars Republic" hoped to achieve recognition and acknowledgement at the Paris Peace conference, but their expectations did not come true. Herewith, the army of the Democratic Republic of Georgia managed to liberate Akhaltsikhe and in spite of the resistance of the British, occupied Potskhovi and Artaani after a fight. The English generals did not express a wish to continue a lost game. In April 1919, they disbanded the Kars Mejlis, arrested the members of the government, and exiled them to the island of Malta.

The National Council of the Russians of the Batumi Region, headed by P. Maslov, having Denikin's support, aspired to separate its historic region Ajara from Georgia. The influence of the army of volunteers in Batumi was so great that Maslov, appointed head of the region, accounted to Denikin for his decisions. The English supported Maslov, distinguished by his anti-Georgian aspirations, for some time as well, but due to the increasing discontent of the population, he was dismissed in May 1919.

Another adventurous act against the Democratic Republic of Georgia took place in 1920 when the supreme council of the allied countries was discussing the question of withdrawing the occupational forces from Batumi. An idea of establishing an Independent Ajaristan was entertained in the local separatist circles grouped around the Islamist organization "Sedai Milet" and had a support of Azerbaijani emissaries and the Russian national council of the Batumi Region. They elected "supreme rulers" and "the commander-in-chief" of the armed forces. They aimed at setting the population of Ajara against Georgia, at building a "juridical neutral" port in Batumi, free from the Entente control, but in reality at building a Russian port, etc.

The leaders of the Independent Ajaristan got in touch with the new government of Turkey in Angora and Soviet Russia and tried to receive money and military assistance from them.

On February 24, 1920, Batumi was declared an international free port under the mandate of the League of Nations. The supreme council of the allies made this decision. The Georgian society was against this decision. Protest rallies were arranged in many cities and towns. People demanded that Georgia's government take vigorous measures to return Batumi.



The Committee of Liberating Moslem Georgia, established as early as in May 1918 by Haidar Abashidze, Zia Abashidze, Kadir Shervashidze and others rallied pro-Georgian forces in southwestern Georgia. It was led by Memed Abashidze. The committee and its newspaper *Moslem Georgia* worked actively to strengthen the national consciousness of Mohammedan Georgians. These activities were carried out under the hard conditions of the rule of the ottoman Turkey and English occupational regime. They played a significant role in the matter of restoring Georgia's territorial integrity. The congress of the representatives of the Georgian Moslems — convened in Batumi on August 31, 1919, under the leadership of the committee — was of a special importance. This congress passed a resolution of "eternal incorporation" of this region into Georgia.

The British troops left Batumi in July 1920. The jurisdiction of the Democratic Republic of Georgia was restored in Batumi and its region.

In February 1921, Moslem Georgia was given autonomy by Georgia's constitution. The plenary powers of the centre and autonomy were to be determined by a special law, but it was not adopted, due to certain circumstances.

The Question of Saingulo

The situation in Saingulo (Char-Belakani) — was somewhat distressing in 1918-1921. This land, lying to the northeast of Kakheti historically was a Georgian province. It was first in the first decades of the seventeenth century that Shah-Abbas tore it from the body of Mother-Georgia.

The Shah of Iran took the eastern part away from the Kakheti Kingdom and turned it into Moslem sultanates. Since that time Daghestani mountain tribes began to settle intensively in that territory. They fully occupied Char and Belakani, made up Lezghins' "masterless communities" and began dominating over the local Georgian population who had been made to embrace Islam by force. The Georgians that had recently adopted Islam were given the name of *Inguilos*.

Russia, having conquered this part of the country, incorporated Saingulo into Tbilisi province first under the name of Char-Belakani Region, and then in 1860 it was given the name of Zakatala Okrug. In the middle of the nineteenth century, thousands of *Inguilos* returned to the Christian faith.

The kinship of the indigenous population of Saingulo with the Georgians, their ethnic, language or religious unity made their integration into the Georgian space easy. As soon as Georgia's state independence was declared, the *Inguilos* asked that the Zakatala Region be incorporated into the Georgian state. The Georgian state was ready to satisfy their demand. However, Azerbaijan and the mountain republics of the Caucasus also had claims on this territory. In the summer of 1918, the Islamic Caucasian army of Osmanli Turkey occupied Zakatala. Military detachments of the Azerbaijanian Republic were part of this army. It is true that Mudross Treaty rooted out the presence of Ottomans in the Southern Caucasus, but Saingulo was not given to the Democratic Republic of Georgia. It in reality remained part of Azerbaijan, for after the Turks had left the region the territory was controlled by military detachments of Azerbaijan.

Georgian society could not be reconciled with the occupation of Saingulo. The government of Georgia tried to restore historic justice by diplomatic means, aspiring to





return its own lands and spread its jurisdiction over them, but these efforts did not have a desirable effect. Bilateral talks between Azerbaijan and Georgia and negotiations at the conferences of the Caucasian republics were futile.

Despite the fact that the question of solving the Sainguilu problem was prolonged in time, the Democratic Republic of Georgia always considered this region to be part of the Georgian state and planned to give it the right of autonomous government. It was important that Soviet Russia also recognized it as the property of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. It was reflected in the Russo-Georgian peace treaty, concluded in Moscow on May 7, 1920.

In the spring of 1920, Sainguilu became the arena of war. Detachments of Red Army invaded it from the territory of Azerbaijan, intending to seize Tbilisi. It was a military attack of Bolshevik Russia on Georgia with the purpose of occupying and sovietizing it. Russia was acting under the cover of Azerbaijan. The Democratic Republic of Georgia took the necessary steps for defense, stopped the adversary after a battle, and forced it to retreat. Warfare ceased because of the above-mentioned agreement. The Georgian army was deployed in one part of Zakatala. As for the other part, it was still subjected to Azerbaijan.

The military forces of Georgia were able to liberate the whole region and guarantee its incorporation into its mother country, but the government evaded the risk of aggravating the situation with Russia. It was satisfied with the fact that Soviet Russia acknowledged in the agreement of May 7 that Sainguilu was Georgia's indisputable territory.

Moscow agreement was to come into force as soon as it was signed, but Azerbaijan, which at that time was already declared a Soviet republic, protested the inclusion of Zakatala into Georgia. The Bolshevik government of Russia avoided hurting the feelings of their new "ally" and made certain concessions to Azerbaijan. An additional agreement to the Russo-Georgian peace-treaty concerning the problem of Sainguilu of May 7 was published on May 12. According to the first paragraph of the agreement, the question of to whom Zakatala Region belonged was to be decided by the Georgian-Azerbaijani mixed committee by arbitration. The chairman of this committee was to be a representative of Soviet Russia.

On June 12, 1920, an agreement between Georgia and the Azerbaijanian Soviet Socialist Republic was signed in the town of Agstafa. Factually it was Russia that spoke on behalf of the Azerbaijani delegation. The agreement essentially repeated the wording, received in Moscow, in regard to Sainguilu. This time it was formulated as follows: "The question of Zakatala Region is to be given to solve to the arbitration committee".

The parties undertook an obligation not to bring their additional military contingent into Zakatala. A four-man control committee was to watch that status quo be maintained. Two members of this committee were to be appointed by Georgia, and two-by Azerbaijan.

In June 1920, the population of Sainguilu rose against the government of Azerbaijan. They arrested Bolshevik commissars, occupied the regional centre, and addressed the Georgian government once more, demanding that it incorporate the Zakatala Region. The Soviet Army and Azerbaijani military detachments suppressed the uprising. The reprisals were so severe that many Ingulios, Lezghins or Tatars left their dwelling-places and became homeless refugees. The government of Georgia sent protest notes to the governments of both Russia and Azerbaijan, demanding that they withdraw the units of



the army from Zakatala Region and form the arbitration committee as soon as possible. Moscow and Baku procrastinated settling the problem. In spite of many demands of the Georgian Democratic Republic, arbitration to solve the Zakatala problem was not conducted.

The constitution, ratified in February 1921, granted the right of autonomous governing of local affairs to Saingulo, considering it to be an indivisible part of the country, but the first republic of Georgia did not have time to spread its jurisdiction over this part of the country.

The Foreign Policy of the Democratic Republic of Georgia

The Democratic Republic of Georgia founded its foreign policy on neutrality and on good-neighborly relations with bordering states and nations. In spite of this circumstance and the fact that the Georgian State was established on its historic territory, it was unable to evade its neighbors' territorial claims and aggression. Herewith, the open or secret interests of big states in the Caucasus became obvious, and they were reflected on the fates of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia.

The main goal of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in the sphere of foreign policy was the international recognition and acknowledgement of its sovereignty. In addition, the government did their best to achieve this goal. The Constituent Assembly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, its diplomatic representatives in foreign countries did everything to reach this aim.

Georgia and Germany

Kaiser Germany was the first state with which the Democratic Republic of Georgia established international relations. It was Germany that saved Georgia from the danger of the Turkish occupation and enabled the Georgian people to restore the national independence abolished 117 years ago. On May 28, 1918, a German-Georgian agreement was signed in Poti. Proceeding from the situation of the current war, this agreement put in order the military, financial, and trade problems between the two countries.

Two Bavarian battalions entered Georgia by the consent of the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and in Tbilisi the German military-diplomatic mission, headed by General von Kress, was established. Soon Georgia's official delegation, headed by the minister of foreign affairs, A. Chkhenkeli, arrived in Berlin. "A friendly, economic and legal agreement" between Germany and Georgia was prepared. According to this agreement, Germany recognized and acknowledged Georgia's state independence. This decision was not opposed in Germany's Reichstag either. A foundation was laid for partnership, based on the principles, acceptable and profitable for both countries.





It is true that Wilhelm II had substantial strategic, economic and political interests concerning Georgia, but these interests were not against Georgia's sovereignty and the Georgian people's national aspirations.

The Germans did not interfere in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. They undertook to be the guarantor of Georgia's independence and were true to their word. When in June 1918, Turks invaded Georgia's south, German soldiers, fighting side by side with Georgians, gave their lives for Georgia's sovereignty and preserving and defending its territorial integrity. The Germans used Georgia's natural and material resources, but always paid for them. The minister of finances and commerce of the Democratic Republic of Georgia — K. Kandelaki — said, "If the Germans by coming to our country and being here saw some profit, we must be fair and say that they paid for everything".

Count Shuhlenburg was head of the German diplomatic representatives in Georgia. Later on Dr. Rauscher took this post. V. Akhmetelashvili was sent to Germany as a plenipotentiary ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

In July 1918, a German-Georgian Cultural Society, a German-Georgian Chamber of Commerce were founded. The German government established several scholarships for Georgian students. The question of giving Georgia a 50 million-mark loan was discussed and the Chiatura Manganese concession and the exploitation of the Poti port with the participation of German firms and companies, etc. were considered, but these business relations were not destined to continue.

The defeat of central states in World War I and the revolution that took place in Germany in November 1918 caused certain corrections both in the international arena and in the relations of Germany and Georgia. Germany was compelled to take her military contingent away from Georgia. The commanders of the British army that came to the Southern Caucasus instead of the Germans tried to prevent the Germans from returning to their country. The Georgians did their best to help the German troops who had done so much good to Georgia to leave the country safely. Georgia's government saw off the German echelons leaving Tbilisi with proper honor. Many German soldiers and officers were awarded the order of Queen Tamar for their share in defending Georgia's independence.

It is true that the intensive military and economic cooperation between Georgia and Germany did not develop, but the diplomatic relationship of these countries did not cease. In September 1920, Germany recognized Georgia's sovereignty de jure.

Relationships with neighboring countries: Georgia and Azerbaijan

After the disintegration of the Transcaucasian Seim, the independence of Azerbaijan was also declared in Tbilisi. The government of the newly established republic, headed by Phatali Khan-Khoel, worked in the capital of Georgia for a certain period. Then it moved to Ganja, and later on, it settled down in Baku, which had been liberated from Bolsheviks only with the help of Turkey. Georgia and Azerbaijan acknowledged each other's de facto sovereignty. N. Kartsivadze was appointed official representative of Georgia in Azerbaijan. He was replaced first by G. Makharadze, then by G. Alshibaya



on the post of the plenipotentiary ambassador; M. Japarov was a diplomatic representative of Azerbaijan in Tbilisi.

The relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia apart from external factors (the world war and its consequences), were affected by the heavy heritage of the Russian colonialism, viz. the disorderly and undivided borders. The government of Azerbaijan tried to determine the frontiers on religious principles and contended for the Zakatala Region and part of Borchalo and Akhaltsikhe districts, inhabited by Moslems. This territory had historically belonged to Georgia, but now its neighbors contended for it. Having declared independence, Azerbaijan occupied the Zakatala territory by military force and spread her own jurisdiction over the whole region. Georgia's protest was futile. Saingulo remained in the hands of Azerbaijan.

The Democratic Republic of Georgia followed the course of close cooperation, economic and defense unity with Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Republic of Mountain Peoples. The governmental circles of Azerbaijan also thought it necessary to have "Caucasian unity". They publicly declared that they intended to solve debatable questions with their neighbors by compromise and peaceful negotiations, and in extreme situations they would turn to international arbitration.

Geostrategic interests and economic needs dictated the necessity of close relationship and partnership of Georgia and Azerbaijan. Nothing could substitute Baku oil to Georgia; as for Azerbaijan, Georgia was the shortest way, connecting Azerbaijan with the Western world. Both countries considered these circumstances. In December 1918, an agreement was concluded which established a duty-free transit between Georgia and Azerbaijan. The agreement, concluded in 1920, envisaged simplifying the procedures of the exchange of goods.

The cooperation of Georgia and Azerbaijan in the sphere of defense was extremely important. It ended in concluding a military agreement of these countries in June 1919.

The treaty was to be in force for three years. The signatories undertook to defend the state independence or territorial inviolability of both republics with joint military forces in the case of danger and aggression of foreign countries.

The political spectrum of both countries approved and supported military agreement between Georgia and Azerbaijan. The document was unanimously ratified in Georgia's Constituent Assembly and as for the Azerbaijani Parliament, only the Bolsheviks were against it.

There was a special paragraph in the treaty that allowed the third Transcaucasian republic to join the defensive alliance of Georgia and Azerbaijan, but Armenia did not join it.

On the initiative of Georgia's government, a conference of the Caucasian republics was convened twice in April of 1919 and 1920. Apart from territorial problems, economic questions and questions of coordinated foreign policy, etc. were discussed. It is noteworthy, that official delegations of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and Azerbaijan, sent to Paris peace conference, found common language, managed to cooperate, published joint addresses, announcements, and other documents.

The governments and legislative bodies of Azerbaijan and Georgia never violated diplomatic etiquette. They sent greeting addresses or telegrams to each other in connection with important events and dates in the state lives of each republic.



The Democratic Republic of Georgia was ready to allow Azerbaijan to use the port of Batumi for free transit, but the political circles of the neighboring state had greater demands. They wanted to get hold of almost the whole of Moslem Georgia and tried to satisfy their claims at the conferences of the London Supreme Council of allies or San Remo. Besides, Azerbaijani organizations (a charity society and others), set up in the Batumi Region, acted against the interests of the Georgian State. They carried out pan-Islamic propaganda among the local population and revived separatism. The employees of Azerbaijani Consulate were also involved in these activities. Georgia's government took certain steps to defend the security of the state, but avoided taking drastic measures and aggravating the situation.

In spite of this, the situation between Georgia and Azerbaijan became strained, especially after the Soviet power was established in Azerbaijan at the end of April of 1920. Bolsheviks became masters of the whole country. The government of the republic did not put up great resistance to the intervention of Russia's Red Army. An absolute majority of the members of the Azerbaijani Parliament supported giving the power to the Bolshevik party. The Democratic Republic of Georgia did not have to carry out the obligations undertaken by the defensive treaty with Azerbaijan. Georgia's government did not send the Georgian military detachments to Azerbaijan. Tbilisi gave political refuge to the representatives of the overthrown government of Azerbaijan, but was unable to protect her own citizens in sovietized Baku. Almost all the heads of Georgia's diplomatic mission were arrested and several Georgian officers serving in the Azerbaijani army were shot, among them General B. Makashvili, etc.

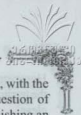
At the beginning of May 1920, Russian military detachments tried to invade Georgia from the Azerbaijani borders. The Georgian Democratic Republic managed to defend itself and repulse the aggressor. In spite of the fact that this fight meant military opposition between Georgia and Russia, after they concluded a peace treaty. A peace treaty was also concluded between the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic and the Democratic Republic of Georgia on June 12, 1920 in Agstafa.

The Agstafa Agreement made the borders between Azerbaijan and Georgia more definite. The frontier was marked on the administrative line, dividing the Tbilisi and Ganja provinces in the times of Tsarism, but the parties could not reach the agreement, concerning the Zakatala Region. The arbitration committee would decide this question.

Georgia and Armenia

The relations of Georgians with the other Christian nation of the Caucasus - Armenians - were of peaceful and good-neighborly character for centuries, however sometimes there were cases of opposition and confrontation between them too.

Armenia lost its statehood in the eleventh century. A certain part of persecuted and oppressed Armenians migrated to Georgia and found a comparatively secure refuge there. Occasionally even the Georgian Kings settled Armenians on the Georgian territory to replenish the thinned out population. In those times, this emigrational process served the economic strength of Georgia. However, in the period of the Russian domination the same process created serious danger to the vital interests of the Georgian nation that had no statehood.



Armenians settled compactly in Lower Kartli (Kvemo Kartli) and Javakheti, with the assistance of the viceroy of the Caucasus. Vorontsov-Dashkov raised the question of separating Borchalo and Akhalkalaki districts from Eastern Georgia and establishing an Armenian Aleksandropol province there. It happened in the first decade of the twentieth century. The Armenian political party *Dashnaksiutun* turned this idea into a part of restoring a mythical "Great Armenia" and after declaring the state independence of Armenia, started acting to realize this plan.

The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia approached the matter of establishing the state frontiers from the point of view of historic, economic, strategic, etc. parameters. As for the Armenian ruling circles, they demanded that the frontiers be established based on the ethnic and real population inhabiting that territory. Armenia contended for Lore-Borchalo, Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki districts. It also had claims on Tbilisi, Gori, Batumi and Batumi Region.

The Georgian government invited Armenians to conferences several times to decide the issues. They suggested that the problems be solved by means of negotiations, and if they did not come to an agreement, to turn to the international arbitration. The leaders of the Armenian Republic evaded giving the final answer, procrastinated the discussion concerning this subject, and when they thought that the proper moment had come, tried to get hold of the debatable territories by military force.

Germany, defeated in World War I, left the Caucasus in the autumn of 1918. British forces were deployed in the Region as representatives of victorious states. The appearance of the English in the Caucasus exhilarated the political leaders of the Armenian Republic and the ruling Dashnakiutun party of the country. Armenian politicians considered the English to be their allies. This feeling was enhanced when the commanders of the British army that had entered the Caucasus expressed their sympathies towards Armenia.

The Armenians did not waste time, and if they were satisfied with showing secret aggression and publishing anti-Georgian articles in the Armenian press (among them in the Armenian newspapers published in Tbilisi), now they began carrying out open military operations.

The Armenian government had tried to carry out military operations in Lore District earlier, in October of 1918, but when the Georgians put up strong resistance, they retreated and explained the conflict as a regrettable misunderstanding.

Before Armenia started warfare against Georgia, it had strengthened its position by concluding a military-political agreement with the army of volunteers. General Denikin promised support to the Ararat Republic and kept his promise too.

On December 9, 1918, Armenia's regular detachments invaded Borchalo and occupied several important strategic places in a few days. According to the general plan worked out in Yerevan in some villages of the district inhabited by Armenians where the population had been armed by Dashnaks beforehand, a rebellion against the Democratic Republic of Georgia started. The Armenian detachments also attacked the villages of the Akhalkalaki District.

Georgia's Social-Democratic government, devoted to internationalism that supported about 300,000 Armenian refugees free of charge on their territory, could not imagine that "fraternal" Armenia would start war against Georgia. At first, they considered Borchalo events to be a provocation and anarchy and sent insignificant forces to suppress them.



However, when the Armenian government addressed them officially and demanded freeing the territory, including Tbilisi (the demand had a form of an ultimatum), everything became clear.

Georgia's government ordered mobilization on December 18 and the detachments of the people's guards and the army headed for the front line. The detachments of volunteers began to form; the Azerbaijani population of the Borchalo District also joined these detachments alongside the Georgian population. Military operations were conducted under the guidance of Generals G. Mazniashvili, S. Akhmetelashvili, A. Makashvili and others. Soon Georgians' priority on the front became clear. In the decisive battle near Shulaveri the adversaries left their positions and retreated.

The command of the allies undertook the part of mediators. Due to them, combat ceased on December 31, 1918.

The war was over, but the relations of Georgia and Armenia were as bad as before. War was not able to solve the problems of the neighboring countries. Later on, the prime minister of the Armenian Republic-Kadjaznuni remarked: "War made us think of many things – we fought against the neighbor with whom we ought to have had closest contacts. It was through Georgia that we got in contact with the outer world. We felt it and sincerely wanted to have friendly relations with Georgia, but we were unable to do it. A certain part in it alongside the position of the Georgian government was played by lack of our political development and inability of ruling the country".

On January 9-17, 1919, an Armenia-Georgia conference was held in Tbilisi. Representatives of allied countries also took part in its work. According to the agreement reached, the debatable territory of the Borchalo District was declared to be the Neutral Zone of Lore, and the borders were established. Before the final solution of the problem, Georgian and Armenian armies were to stand there in turn. The provisional administration was to be mixed: Georgian-Armenian under the supervision of a representative of the allies. The Akhalkalaki Region was subordinated to Georgia's government and the administration appointed by it, but it was also under the control of the commissar of the allies.

At the second conference of Georgia and Armenia (28 February-3 March, 1919), also conducted with the participation of the allies, the questions of diplomatic relations, foreign trade, communication of citizens, restoration of means of communication, etc. were decided. As for the question of frontiers, it remained unsolved. There was hope that the Paris Peace Conference would decide it.

On March 8, 1919, Georgia acknowledged Armenian Republic de-jure, and on March 24, Armenia recognized the state sovereignty of Georgia juridically. S. Mdivani was plenipotentiary representative of Georgia in Armenia, and A. Jamalyan headed Armenia's diplomatic mission in Georgia.

Two treaties were concluded in Tbilisi between Georgia and Armenia on November 3, 1919. According to the first document, the parties were to solve all debatable questions by mutual agreement or arbitration, as for the second, it envisaged free transit between the neighboring republics during three years. Georgia's Constituent Assembly and Armenia's Khorvud (parliament) ratified both treaties.

Armenia had complicated and strained relations with the Azerbaijanian Republic. She rejected the offer of joining Georgia-Azerbaijan Defense alliance, and preferred to be



separated from it. In spite of this, on November 23, 1919, on the initiative of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, an agreement was reached between Armenia and Azerbaijan to solve the debatable issues by arbitration. A course of peaceful co-existence in the relations of the Caucasian states gradually became noticeable. This was doubtlessly justified and suited the interests of each.

It was also possible to settle the questions of frontiers and territorial division, reaching a reasonable compromise, but the government of Armenia did not agree to it. The leaders of Armenian government expected to be greatly supported by the allied states. They also expected to be greatly supported by the president of the United States of America, W. Wilson (at that time the question of conferring the US mandate on Armenia was actively discussed). That was the reason that they did not take the interests of their neighbors into consideration and presented bold demands at Paris, London or San-Remo international conferences.

In connection with Georgia Armenia was not satisfied with the guarantee promised to her that it would be allowed to go out on the Black Sea. She sometimes demanded establishing the frontier between Georgia and Armenia along the River Chorokhi or being given part of the Batumi port, and sometimes to declare the railway line that would in future connect Armenia with Batumi, extraterritorial and the property of Armenia. The Georgian party did not agree to it and the agreement was not concluded. The hope that the international organizations would solve the question of Armenia's territorial claims to the Democratic Republic of Georgia turned out to be futile. Armenia remained separated from the neighboring countries as she had a military conflict with Azerbaijan after the conflict with Georgia in the spring of 1920.

The Republic of Ararat very soon came to know the results of self-isolation. When the army of Mustafa-Kemal invaded Kars and Aleksandropol in November 1920, nobody interceded for her. Neither Georgia nor Azerbaijan did anything to help their neighbor in her trouble. Armenia was "assisted" only by Bolshevik Russia. Moscow managed to stop the Turkish aggression, but put an end to the state independence of Armenia and turned this country into a puppet soviet socialist republic.

Georgia and Ottoman Turkey

The declaration of Georgia's state independence in May 1918 turned out to be rather unexpected but quite acceptable to Ottoman Turkey. At the Sultan's court, they were convinced that the newly established small Caucasian republics would not be able to prevent the expansionist plans of the Ottoman Empire in the region. On the contrary, it would be easier to conquer them separately, but to get consent to the "voluntary delivery" of the already occupied territories of Armenia and Georgia would not be difficult for Istanbul. And it really happened so.

The conference, ceased in Batumi several days before, was resumed on May 31, 1918. The representatives of Georgia and Azerbaijan appeared at the conference separately this time, and not as the representatives of the United Transcaucasian State. The chairman of the government – N. Ramishvili headed the official delegation of Georgia, as for the Turkish delegation it was headed by Khalil-Bey, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice.



Ottoman Turkey officially informed Tbilisi through its representative in the Georgian Democratic Republic – Kerim Pasha that the Turkish army detachments were going to leave Akhaltsikhe-Akhalkalaki and Lore Districts and offered the government of Georgia to occupy those territories. Aiming at causing disagreement between the neighboring countries, the Turkish government suggested to the Armenian Republic that it should enter Lore. Armenia accepted this provocative proposal. It was followed by a conflict with Georgia at the frontier. Herewith, Turkey tried to retain her influence in the evacuated districts. With this purpose, the Osmanli government supplied Islamic councils there with arms, left them officers and askers. The representatives of the Osmanli government and



of military circles revived separatism among Samtskhe-Javakheti begs, assisted creating anti-Georgian units, the so called Akhaltsikhe government, the Republic of Kars or independent Ajarstan, etc.

Soon Ottoman Turkey found herself in trouble. The powerful Porta began disintegrating. The control of victorious allies was established on many of its domains. The famous Sevre Treaty of August 10, 1920 even made its sovereignty fictional. The Sultan preserved his throne, but the power was taken by the government of the great national meeting, formed in Angora (Ankara), headed by Mustafa Kemal.

Kemal, who made friends with the Soviet Russia, attacked Armenia in the autumn of 1920, and considerably oppressed the Ararat Republic. The danger of the Turkish invasion of Georgia appeared. The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia announced urgent mobilization and began getting ready for defense.

To discharge the situation and to win the favor of Georgia the government of Turkey sent an official delegation to Tbilisi. The danger of Georgia's occupation disappeared. Diplomatic relations were established between the two countries. S. Mdivani was appointed ambassador in Angora. The Diplomatic representative of Turkey in Georgia was Kiazim Bey.

On the one hand, Turkey tried to convince N. Zhordania that the independence and strengthening of Georgia was in their interests too, but on the other hand, she carried out negotiations with Russia against Georgia. They came to an agreement: if Russia attacked Georgia, Turkey was to remain neutral. For this, it would receive part of Georgia's territory.

In February 1921, when the Red Army invaded Georgia, Kemal demanded that Tbilisi withdraw its army from Artaan-Artvini. Being at war with Bolshevik Russia, Georgia was compelled to fulfil this unjust demand. The Turks occupied the above-mentioned regions.

Kiazim Bey informed Noe Zhordania that this fact ended debatable problems between Turkey and Georgia and Angora was ready to help the "friendly" country to repulse the Bolshevik aggression.

Georgia was unable to understand the real intention of Turkey and accepted her proposal. On March 11, 1921, the Turkish military detachments entered the Batumi Region. Turkish askers appeared in Akhaltsikhe-Akhalkalaki districts as well, but with no intention to assist the Georgians. The Turks occupied Batumi. Kiazim Bey was appointed governor of the Batumi Region, and according to the decision of the Great National meeting, Moslem Georgia was declared part of Turkey.

The situation became complicated. The days of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, defeated by the Soviet Russia, were numbered. Its government left the country on March 17, 1921. The day before that, on March 16, "an agreement of brotherhood and friendship" had been concluded in Moscow between Russia and Turkey. According to it, Batumi was left to Georgia, and Artvini and Artaaani districts became the property of Turkey.

In spite of the agreement, the Turks were not in a hurry to leave Batumi. It took several days' fighting to free it. The Georgian army led by General G. Mazniashvili drove the occupants away and preserved Batumi for Georgia.



Georgia and England

Unlike Germany, the English troops were not invited to Georgia by the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. The military force of the allied states, recruited from British soldiers, if we repeat W. Churchill's words, appeared in the Caucasus as an "inheritance" of World War I. This "inheritance" allowed England to become the supervisor of the region, and in reality, its master. After the Mudross Peace Treaty, the influence of Britain spread over the whole East.

The attitude of the English political elite towards the Southern Caucasus was not similar. Various questions concerning this region were discussed, viz. those of incorporating it into Russia, acknowledging the sovereignty of these republics, forming a united state of the latter, etc. London did not yet have a clearly formed course, concerning the future of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. The task of the military mission sent there was "to establish order and restore normal conditions of life".

The English generals who had arrived here had their own idea of "social order". For instance, they established the posts of general-governors in Baku and Batumi and subordinated the entire administrative power to their control.

It is true that Britain did not recognize the Democratic Republic of Georgia officially for quite a long time, but the military representatives cooperated with the legitimate government of the country.

At the end of 1918, the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs promised Georgia to recognize its state independence. This fact strengthened the trust of the Georgian government in Great Britain, considered the "cradle of democracy." Noe Zhordania said that the Democratic Republic of Georgia was ready to shape its course to the policy of the allied countries and to adhere to the principles of justice declared by them.

Against this background the actions of the commanders of the English army, deployed in the Caucasus, did not assist to develop good relations between Georgia and England. Each step made by the British generals against the state interests of Georgia – preventing the restoration of the territorial integrity of the country, their licentious behavior in the Batumi Region, etc. – caused a negative reaction of the Georgian political spectrum, and the whole Georgian society.

Three commanders-in-chief — Forestie-Walker, Thomson, and Core — succeeded one another in the Southern Caucasus in the period of the military presence of the English in Georgia. The attitude of none of them towards the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia could be considered to be favorable. They thought they were in southern Russia and not in an independent Georgia. The English aspired to draw Georgia into the anti-Bolshevik front and to bring it closer to the army of volunteers. This was not easy to achieve. Georgia would not give up her independence, and the army of volunteers, dreaming of restoring a united and indivisible Russia, was trying to make Georgia part of this empire again.

The allies planned the restoration of old Russia as well. Therefore, the governmental circles of England connected the political fate of Georgia, the problem of its being or disappearance, with the Russian issue. They put their hopes sometimes on Kolchak and sometimes on Denikin. As for the acknowledgement of Georgia's independence, it was delayed.



When it became clear that the Bolsheviks were going to win the civil war, the attitude of England towards the countries of the Southern Caucasus, among them towards Georgia, changed.

The government of Great Britain decided to withdraw their troops from Georgia as early as in April of 1919 and carried out this decision in August (the military units of the British army remained only in the Batumi Region). Alongside it, London strengthened its diplomatic representatives in Georgia. A diplomatic mission was sent to Tbilisi, headed by John Oliver Wardrop, a friend of the Georgian people.

In January 1920, the Supreme Council of Allies recognized the Democratic Republic of Georgia and its government de-facto on Lord Curzon's initiative. Due to this fact, the House of Commons of England sent a telegram of greeting to Georgia's Constituent Assembly. The Georgian society was pleased to receive the congratulation. The abased prestige of the British in Georgia began gradually to restore. A prospect of improving the English-Georgian relations appeared too. However, after the English troops were withdrawn from the Caucasus Georgia lost its vital importance for the British policy in the Near East. Economic contacts with Georgia were not seriously discussed in England, and after the Soviet government was established in Azerbaijan, the role of the region as a bridgehead for the fight against Bolshevism was ended. Interest in Georgia died down on the territory of Albion.

England did not want to leave Batumi, but the Democratic Republic of Georgia did her best to get it back by diplomatic and other means. Other countries of the Entente also had their interests in this one of the most important ports of the Black Sea. They could not reconcile with the British domination there and aspired to enhance their rights too. It was this interest of the West in Batumi that conditioned its being declared an international free port in February 1920.

Opinions concerning the withdrawal of the army differed in the government of England. Prime-Minister Lloyd George who supported establishing trade-economic relations with Soviet Russia demanded leaving Batumi at the end of 1919. The group of J. Curzon and W. Churchill had the opposite opinion. Lloyd George's point of view got the upper hand. In July 1920, the British military contingent was withdrawn from Batumi. The Batumi region was returned to its legitimate owner Georgia.

The incorporation of Batumi and its region into the Georgian Democratic Republic was considered a great success in the country. It was really an important fact, but that the departure of the British from Georgia also meant the departure of Europe from the region and turning its back on the Caucasus, was not fully understood by the ruling circles of Georgia at that time.

In January 1921, England and the allied states recognized the sovereignty of Georgia de-jure. It is noteworthy that this international recognition did not have any practical significance for Georgia any longer. A short time before, in December of 1920, England, France and other countries refused to admit Georgia to the League of Nations. It was equivalent to destroying "this brave, but small country, situated at the borders of Russia".

Soviet historiography considered the entrance of the English military detachments into Georgia to be an intervention. It must be said that this point of view was based on the ideological motif and not on objective scientific argumentation. The parallel between the participation of the British in the civil war of Russia on the side of the White Guard and the military presence of the English in Georgia in 1918-1920 is unjustified.



The English military detachments occupied the Batumi Region for a year and a half, they violated Georgia's sovereignty many times, they did not recognize it for quite a long time, but the English had never made an attempt to overthrow the government of the Georgian Democratic Republic by force or change it in any way. They did not take part in Georgia's political life. In spite of the fact that the English military mission did not have friendly relations with the government of the country, that the actions of some generals were beyond their competence and sometimes even violated the state rights of Georgia, the presence of the British armies in Georgia played another important role. If we use modern terminology, England protected peace process in the Caucasus; it was the restraining factor of the aggression, coming towards Georgia from the north or south. It was clearly proved in February and March of 1921 when Georgia, forsaken by Europe, became the victim of the violence of Bolshevik Russia.

Relations with Russia: Georgia and White Guard Russia

When Georgia declared her state independence on May 26, 1918, a civil war was raging in Russia. The supporters of the Soviet government "red" and their adversary "white" forces were engaged in a life and death struggle. In spite of differing ideologies and enmity, they had one thing in common – none of these forces could reconcile with the idea of the disintegration of the empire and they did not recognize the independence of the neighboring countries that had separated from Russia.

The Democratic Republic of Georgia did not take part in the civil war in Russia in spite of the fact that both parties tried to draw her into it. The fate of not only Russia, but the countries separated from it and aspiring to freedom, greatly depended on the course and results of the war.

One of the main forces opposing the Bolshevik regime was the army of volunteers. It was formed as early as in November-December 1917 by generals M. Alekseyev, L. Kornilov and A. Denikin. This numerous and powerful military formation, faultlessly equipped with the finances of the allies, was manned with experienced generals, officers, and cadets.

The volunteers fought not only to seize power, but also to restore the empire. The army of volunteers called "the White Guard" became much stronger after General Denikin began to head it.

By the spring of 1918, Denikin's power had spread over the whole of southern Russia. Among these territories was the Republic of Kuban. It was occupied against the wish of the Cossacks. This republic became a neighbor of Georgia, being situated on the border of Abkhazia. The government of Kuban had business relations with the Democratic Republic of Georgia from the very beginning. Kuban was ready to sell wheat to Georgia, etc.

The first contact of the Georgian Democratic Republic with the army of volunteers took place when her army drove out the Bolshevik detachments that had invaded Abkhazia. While pursuing them the Georgian army occupied Tuapse and Sochi in July 1918. In the same period the detachments of the White Guard seized Ekaterinodar and occupied Stavropol Region.



Denikin demanded that the Georgian government leave not only Sochi and Tuapse, but give him the Gagra Region too. At the negotiations in September 1918, the representatives of the Georgians were the Minister of Foreign Affairs E. Gegechkori and General G. Mazniashvili, and of the army of volunteers – Generals A. Denikin, M. Alekseyev and others. The question of frontiers remained unsolved. Gegechkori rejected the claims of volunteers on the Gagra Region and presented convincing proof of its being a Georgian land.

Denikin's agents tried to oppress Georgia in Abkhazia and the Batumi Region by means of anti-Georgian forces. The army of volunteers took the side of the Ararat Republic during the war between Georgia and Armenia.

The World War being over, military and political control of the Supreme Council of the allies was established in the Caucasus. Great Britain was appointed arbiter. The military mission of England that had arrived in the Caucasus undertook the part of a mediator between the army of volunteers and Georgia. According to the project compiled by the English, Georgia was to withdraw her army from Sochi. The question whose territory it was would be decided at the Paris peace conference. The Georgian administration stayed in Sochi temporarily. The army of the White Guard was not allowed to enter Sochi.

Georgia fulfilled the term of the agreement and began evacuating her military detachments from Sochi. Denikin took advantage of the fact and occupied the city at once. The British were unable to stop the recalcitrant general. In February 1919, the detachments of volunteers invaded the territory of Gagra as well and fortified themselves on the bank of the River Bzib. Denikin aspired to occupy the whole of Abkhazia; he tried to convince the command of the British army that it was necessary to occupy Abkhazia by the White Guard. The general justified this necessity by asserting that the official representatives of the Abkhazian people had addressed him for help. In reality, these "official representatives" were several impostors, hostilely disposed towards Georgians, whose behavior was condemned even by the anti-Georgian representatives of Abkhazia's People's Council.

The volunteers behaved badly on the occupied territories: they marauded, robbed the local population, and so on. The discontent of the population turned into a rebellion against the White Guard.

The government of Georgia addressed the British command, requesting that it stop Denikin's aggression, and was answered by promises that were not fulfilled. Official Tbilisi offered the representatives of the allies to place pickets along the river Mekhadiri, as for the Sochi Region – to make it a neutral zone before the decision of the Paris conference; otherwise, the Democratic Republic of Georgia would try to improve the situation with her own forces.

The military mission of England did not hurry to react, but they did not allow the Georgian government to use force.

In this situation the government of Georgia made a bold step – in 1919 they sent their army against Denikin, liberated Gagra, and occupied the positions on the left bank of the River Mekhadiri. This act of the government was approved by the Constituent Assembly. The success exhilarated the whole of Georgian society.

The fight between Georgia and the army of volunteers did not suit the plans of the allies. These countries still considered both of these forces to be the members of the united camp opposing Bolshevism. The command of the British army deployed in the



Caucasus blamed Georgia of acting against England and demanded that it restore the status quo.

On May 23, 1919, negotiations with the delegations of the army of volunteers were resumed in Tbilisi with the participation of the British. British General Breams represented the party of the White Guard. He categorically raised the question of returning the Georgian troops to the initial positions and declared that Georgia should not aspire to independence, it was better for her to be part of united Russia, and that she should be satisfied with the self-government given to her by Denikin. He was speaking on behalf of Denikin.

The national freedom and state independence were the choice of the Georgian people, and that was why the Georgian government rejected the demands of the volunteers. The negotiations were wrecked.

Denikin started attacks in different directions. He destroyed the Republic of the Mountain Peoples, approached Azerbaijan, and was about to invade Abkhazia. The danger was serious. The Constituent Assembly of Georgia ordered the government to take vigorous measures to defend the country.

The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia took necessary measures in both military matters and diplomatic questions. The defense agreement concluded in June 1919 between the republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan was of a particular importance. It envisaged joint efforts to reject the expected attack. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia sent a telegram to the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Lloyd George, and asked to deploy the British troops in the Gagra Region with the purpose of its temporary neutralization. The official delegations of the Republics of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Mountain Peoples expressed their protest against the aggression of the White Guard at the Paris Peace Conference and requested that the Supreme Council of the allies take care of this question.

Herewith, the government of Georgia agreed on a certain compromise and withdrew the Georgian Army from the River Mekhadiri to the other side of the Bzib. According to the decision of the allies, a demarcation line was established between the opposed parties.

The White Guard was unable to carry out their intention of conquering Georgia. Denikin, defeated by Soviet Russia, became more loyal towards the Democratic Republic of Georgia. On February 11, 1920, the army of volunteers acknowledged the sovereignty of the republics of the Southern Caucasus de-facto.

Georgia and Soviet Russia

Lenin and the Bolshevik Party acknowledged the self-determination of nations, but it had a form of declaration and in reality, they opposed the free life of nations that had broken away from Russia. Having seized power, the Bolsheviks fought desperately to restore the integration of Russia. Unlike the White Guard who had set the restoration of the empire as their main object and did not conceal it, the Bolsheviks acted clandestinely. They declared putting a yoke of empire again on the peoples who had escaped the domination of tsarism to be the expression of their own free will and desire.

The attitude of Soviet Russia towards the Democratic Republic of Georgia was negative from the very start. The Kremlin considered the newly created Georgian state



to be a hostile country, but was unable to act against it vigorously because of the civil war. Russia's aggression was restrained due to the presence on the Georgian territory of military detachments first of Germany and later of England.

The positions of Bolshevism in Georgia were considerably weakened after the 1905 and 1917 revolutions. Its influence and authority as a political power became more insignificant since the time of the restoration of Georgia's independence. However, the local Bolsheviks, provided financially by Soviet Russia, carried out anti-state activities widely. Apart from the Bolsheviks, the National Council of Russians, the Russian clergy, and part of the non-Georgian population (Abkhazians, Ossets and others) whose separatist aspirations were encouraged by the Russians performed the role of the fifth column in Georgia.

The Georgian political spectrum considered Bolshevism to be a reactionary and quite unacceptable trend for the aims and ideals of the Georgian people. It was known to the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia that it was Soviet Russia who caused disturbances in different parts of Georgia. Bolsheviks arranged these disturbances. Among them were the insurrection in the Dusheti District, Abkhazia, in the communities of Shida Kartli (Inner Kartli) inhabited by Ossets and so on. The regional committee of RCP(B) was preparing a wide-scale insurrection in Georgia in the autumn of 1919 in cooperation with Moscow. Getting rid of the circumstances, impeding the peaceful development of the country, made it necessary to put in order the relations with the northern neighbor in time, but Bolshevik Russia tried to evade it. It refused to acknowledge the Georgian State, prohibited the existence of Georgia's diplomatic representatives in Moscow, and arrested Ambassador G. Khundadze and put him to prison.

No anti-Russian hysteria, persecution of the Russian population or their deportation followed the provocations of the Bolsheviks against Georgia, their sometimes secret and sometimes open aggression. On the contrary, many representatives of the Russian intelligentsia who had escaped the proletarian regime of Russia found refuge in Georgia, and continued working there.

The leaders of the Democratic Republic of Georgia did not exclude the possibility of having political and economic cooperation with Soviet Russia. They even tried to find ways to do it, but only on condition that Russia recognized the independence of Georgia.

At the beginning of 1920, Lenin proposed that Georgia enter a military union against the army of volunteers. If Georgia accepted this proposal, she would be involved in Russia's civil war, violating the neutrality principle adopted by her and would cause new complications for the republic. Noe Zhordania refused the proposal. Neither the government of Azerbaijan agreed to the proposal of the Kremlin. Lenin did not conceal his displeasure, but he was unable to punish the recalcitrant republics yet.

Despite the fact that the political leaders of Soviet Russia had not managed to persuade Democratic Georgia to conclude a military alliance, they did not give up their intentions concerning Georgia. Georgia had a very important function to fulfil according to the plan of the Bolsheviks' world proletarian revolution, viz. "Tbilisi was to play the part of Moscow in the East". In other words, the Kremlin thought that it would be possible for the Bolshevism to penetrate into the Near East through Georgia.

The East, being the main direction for the international revolution, and the road towards it passed via Georgia, Russia was to seize this road, and it was "sovietizing" Georgia.



Two projects had been worked out in Russia with this purpose. The first one planned to achieve this aim by peaceful means, and the other – by military intervention. Which of these two would be given priority, and which of them would be realized, greatly depended on the international situation, and on the way the events would develop both in Georgia and Russia.

At the end of April 1920, after the Eleventh Army had entered Baku without problems and established the Soviet power in Azerbaijan, S. Orjonikidze, the leader of the Bolsheviks, moved the units of the Red army towards the frontiers of Georgia. Orjonikidze thought that he would seize Tbilisi in a few days, so he sent a telegram to Lenin, "Everything will be all right". However, the change of the political situation at home and abroad made him give up his intention.

In those very days Bolshevik Russia was attacked by Pilsudski from Poland, who occupied Kiev. At the same time, Vrangeli landed his forces in Kuban from the Crimea. It was followed by the demand of the minister of foreign affairs of Great Britain, Curzon, that Moscow cease military operations in the Crimea and the Caucasus. On its part, the Democratic Republic of Georgia managed to defend its territory and made the units of Soviet Russia which had come from Azerbaijan, retreat. The Kremlin was compelled to establish peaceful relations with Georgia for the time being. Lenin agreed to the initiative of the Georgian party to start negotiations.

A peace treaty between Russia's Soviet Socialist and Georgia's Democratic Republics was concluded in Moscow on May 7, 1920. The document was signed by the member of Georgia's Constituent Assembly G. Uratadze and the Assistant Commissar of Russia's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, L. Karakhan. Both of them were given the necessary plenary rights by their governments.

According to the agreement, Russia unconditionally recognized Georgia's independence; it was not going to interfere in its internal affairs and rejected its former rights on the territory of Georgia and its people. Soviet Russia acknowledged all the districts of Tbilisi and Kutaisi provinces that had been part of the Caucasian viceroyalty to be a doubtless indivisible part of Georgia together with Batumi, Sukhumi and Zakatala Regions.

Alongside articles confirming sovereignty, the agreement contained points violating Georgia's state interests (the neutralization of the Caucasian passes, bestowing the right to the communist party of acting legally, the restriction of free relations with other states) which turned out to be fateful for the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Especially harmful was the article that compelled the Georgian State to drive away from its borders any army and military detachments that were not part of Georgia's armed forces. It directly concerned the British detachments whose withdrawal was already decided by the English government, but the British military contingent had not yet left Batumi. Georgia itself assisted her isolation by agreeing to these terms.

The May 7, 1920 Russo-Georgian peace treaty was not ratified. It was enforced as a fact. It was important because the metropolis legally recognized the independence of the former colony and its territorial integrity. This circumstance doubtlessly enhanced the prestige of the Democratic Republic of Georgia both inside the country and outside its borders, facilitating the international recognition and acknowledgment of its sovereignty, but the same agreement made it easy for Bolshevik Russia to conquer Georgia. By the



legalizing of the Communist party and giving it full freedom as it was envisaged by the document adopted in Moscow, an anti-state force was growing stronger in Georgia. This force conducted obvious propaganda of overthrowing the Democratic Republic and establishing Soviet power.

Based on the agreement diplomatic relations were established between Georgia and Russia. Ambassadors were exchanged. S. Kirov, a well-known Bolshevik, was appointed plenipotentiary representative of RSFR in Georgia (later on his place was occupied by E. Sheinman), and the government of Georgia sent to Moscow G. Makharadze, a member of the Constituent Assembly, a Social Democrat, as an ambassador. A trade-transit agreement was concluded in Tbilisi in November 1920. Russia and Georgia allowed free transit to each other; the contours of cooperation of the two countries in other spheres were also noticeable.

Georgia carried out the obligations envisaged by the agreement (the legalization of Communist organizations, changing places to the posts on the passes, etc.) but peaceful relations with Soviet Russia did not last long. In February 1921, Russia broke the Moscow peace treaty unilaterally, invaded the borders of the sovereign neighbor state with an army and put an end to the existence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

The International Recognition of the Democratic Republic of Georgia

A part from peaceful relations with neighboring countries, the international recognition of the sovereignty of the young Georgian state was of a vital importance for it. The question of small nations had been seldom raised at large world gatherings before, but by the beginning of 1919 the entire political elite of the West had specially got together to decide their future.

The representatives of the states that had won World War I and who had been invited to the Paris conference (January 1919 – December 1920) discussed the question of arranging the life of humanity in a new manner and compiling a new political map of the world. The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia selected a solid delegation to send to the conference. Their task was that the leading countries of the world should officially recognize and acknowledge Georgia's statehood and that the color of Georgia's flag should be imprinted on this map. The delegation that consisted of scholars, scientists and experts was headed by the chairman of the Constituent Assembly – N. Chkheidze.

All the members of the delegation were unable to go to Europe. Only N. Chkheidze, I. Tsereteli and Z. Avalishvili were allowed to take part in the work of the conference. The other members of the delegation returned from Constantinople.

The Georgian delegation stayed in Paris from March 1919 to the end of the following year. In this period this delegation was the main representative of the Georgian Democratic Republic abroad. Apart from political questions, the delegation carried out informational and propagandist work, performed consular obligations, had the right to conduct economic affairs, etc.

On March 14, 1919, Georgia's delegation presented a memorandum to the conference, containing a brief description of Georgia's past and current reality. The necessity of



Georgia's state independence was substantiated in the document. By this memorandum, the government of Georgia asked the allied states to support the Georgian people's choice, to recognize the Georgian nation among other nations and acknowledge its sovereignty. Alongside the memorandum, the conference was given the map of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, compiled in French, on which Georgia's territory and frontiers were distinctly outlined.

Georgia as a separate state should have been interesting for the West with her economic resources (forests, ore, and water energy), Batumi and Poti ports, and its quite important transit function. Georgia could have become the road "of open economic and cultural relations between Europe, Central and Nearer Asia".

The allied states considered Georgia's problem from the point of view of international politics, taking into account the real interests of Russia in the region and the balance of forces. They were worried by the unstable situation in the Caucasian countries because of disagreements about the frontiers, etc.

The heads of the leading countries of the conference revealed a special interest in Russia. It was the Russian question that mainly determined the situation of the whole Caucasus. If the favorite of the allied forces (Kolchack and the army of volunteers) won, the recognition of Georgia's independence was doubtful. This question practically had not even been raised at the conference before the movement of the White Guard showed the signs of downfall.

In case the Paris conference refused to acknowledge Georgia's sovereignty, N. Chkheidze had been instructed by the head of the government N. Zhordania to obtain the protection of England or France on condition that they would not interfere in the internal affairs of Georgia.

At that time, Great Britain played that role in the Southern Caucasus on behalf of the allied forces. However, in the spring of 1919, Britain ceased carrying out active policy in the Region and decided to withdraw her troops from there. Lloyd George offered Italy to take the mandate on Georgia. The government of Italy set seriously about this question and started exploring the ground.

The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia did not put up any resistance, for it was officially declared that Italy would not interfere in Georgia's internal affairs. The guiding motif of Italy was economic. It was interested in Georgia's natural resources (especially coal) and drew up conjectural plans of exploiting them in the form of concessions. An extraordinary mission of Italy, headed by Colonel M. Gamba, arrived in Tbilisi in April, 1919. This mission still more strengthened the idea of sending an expedition corps to Georgia in Orlando's cabinet. Such a group had even been prepared, but due to the changes that took place in the Italian government in June 1919 the question of its being sent to Georgia was removed from the agenda. The new Prime Minister F. Nitti thought that the presence of Italian troops in Georgia was certain to cause a military confrontation with Russia and this was unacceptable to him. The mandate of Italy on Georgia did not take place.

At the very same time, the interests of the United States of America in the Southern Caucasus also became obvious. President W. Wilson was ready to take a mandate on Armenia. He sent several missions to the region with this purpose (among them were the



rector of Chicago University, Professor Judson, Captain B. Moore, General J. Harbord, etc.).

The ruling forces of Georgia were unable to estimate properly the role of a new actor, the USA, in the international politics after World War I. that was the reason that the Georgian diplomats did not make substantial attempts to find ways of approaching the administration of this transoceanic country. On their part, the government of the USA also distrusted Georgia's aspiration to freedom. In spite of this, the American missions did not evade Georgia. They got acquainted with the situation there and got the impression that one mandate, common to all, was necessary on the Southern Caucasus, proceeding from its economic interests.

America's assistance was seen in a different way in Georgia, viz. they considered it to be financial and diplomatic support. The government of Georgia did not ask the USA to establish a mandate on their own country. "We are not the country that needs a mandate, or a guardian, we are our own mandatory, our guardian, and our own masters", Noe Zhordania said, speaking at the Constituent Assembly. They saw encroachment on the country's state independence in it, but they expected that the enactment of America's mandate on Armenia would be good for Georgia as well. This expectation also turned out to be futile, for the US Senate rejected Wilson's plan.

At the beginning of 1920, when the priority of the Soviet government in Russia's internal fight became obvious, the allied states found it necessary to lock Bolshevism within the borders of Russia proper and defend peripheral countries from its penetration into them. The de facto acknowledgment of Georgia's Democratic Republic on January 11, 1920 that was decided by the governments of England, France and Italy was essentially conditioned by this idea. This resolution of the allies was joined by Japan in February of the same year and by Belgium in August. In addition, earlier, on September 15, 1919 the government of Argentina officially recognized the state independence of Georgia.

On this basis of the agreement between Soviet Russia and Georgia's Democratic Republic, concluded on May 7, 1920, the RSFSR recognized Georgia to be a separate state. The voluntary giving up the former colony by the metropolis enhanced the international confidence in the independence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Many foreign countries began to recognize legally Georgia's sovereignty.

The visit of the delegation of the European Socialists to Tbilisi in September of 1920 was of a certain importance for the recognition of Georgia's independence. The 15 man delegation consisted of the leaders of the 2nd International and prominent representatives, viz. Karl Kautski, Emil Wanderwelde, Ramsey MacDonald, Pierre Renodel, etc. The visitors stayed in Georgia ten days and became acquainted with the country's past, culture, traditions, as well as the achievements and the difficulties in building a new state.

The visit was not only the support of Georgia's ruling political power. Having returned to their home-countries, the European Socialists rendered a certain service to the Georgian state in general, raised their voices in defense of her rights, and demanded legal recognition of the Georgian Democratic Republic before the governments and parliaments of their countries.

In January 1921, the Supreme Council of the allied countries, having discussed the question for several days, agreed to the proposal of France and adopted a resolution of recognizing Georgia's independence de-jure. France, England, Italy, Japan, Belgium



(January 27, 1921), Austria, Romania, Luxemburg (February 1921), Haiti, Libya, Mexico (March-April 1921), etc. were among those who recognized the sovereignty of the Georgian Democratic Republic.

The international recognition of the young Georgian state was the most important achievement, but this resonant success was overshadowed by another resolution, adopted in Geneva on December 16, 1920, that left Georgia out of the League of Nations.

The League of Nations was established in April 1919 on the initiative of the US President W. Wilson. It united victorious allied states. The task of this international organization was to establish friendly relations, universal peace and security among states. To avoid wars, the League of Nations was ready to decide debatable questions by means of talks, and to express the principles of justice and philanthropy by protecting the rights of small nations.

Georgia expressed the wish of joining the new universal organization, thinking it to be a trustworthy guarantor of strengthening its independence. The foundation of such an illusion was the tenth article of the rules of the League. It envisaged defending any member state in the case of aggression from another country. Unfortunately, this very article that seemed to be an anchor of safety to Georgia prevented its joining the League.

Georgia appeared to have many defenders and supporters in its legal aspiration to occupy her own place in the international union of states. The endeavors of F. Nansen (Norway), Lord R. Cecil (South Africa) and others should be specially mentioned. They convincingly substantiated the justice and necessity of receiving Georgia in the League of Nations, requested to support it, but justice was defeated by pragmatism.

While Georgia's question was being discussed, the majority of 24 member states of the League of Nations became convinced that the point of view of England and France that the League of Nations would not be able to defend Georgia, situated in the outlying problematic region of Europe, from the attack of aggressors was correct. This was the reason that 16 states refused to admit the Georgian Democratic Republic to the League of Nations and left the country to its fate.

The Overthrow of the Democratic Republic of Georgia: Russia's Return to Georgia

The whole history of the existence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia lasted about three years. There were both achievements and mistakes on the way of building the state during this short period. Despite the critical international situation, permanent aggression of neighboring countries, economic or financial problems, Georgia became a state. It is also important that this state was democratic by its nature and established liberal values. The Georgian people learned what a free market, a multi-party political system, parliamentarism, freedom of press, civil society, etc. represented. They gradually got accustomed to these realities and mastered them.

No other particular danger threatened Georgia inside the country in such a reality. The Social Democratic Party retained power during two years without a serious governmental crisis. It was not excluded that the opposition might win a victory in the future elections,



but this ordinary event of the democratic political process did not threaten the sovereignty of the country in any way.

It was obvious that the Democratic Republic of Georgia faced an economic crisis, caused by the war, broken economic contacts with Russia, and other difficulties. It was not easy to overcome them with only inner resources. However, the government managed to cover the deficit of the budget by printing paper money and refraining from taking loans from foreign countries in critical situations. The crisis did not mean that the country had no future: the recognition of the country's sovereignty, the further financial assets, attracting foreign capital, etc. would rescue Georgia from economic catastrophe. And indeed, the reason of the fall of the Georgian Democratic Republic was not this. It was a victim of an enemy's attack, a victim of the aggression of a foreign country. Soviet Russia was the aggressor and the oppressor.

Having won a victory in the civil war and repulsed the foreign intervention, the Bolsheviks (Moscow) turned their aggression towards the Southern Caucasus. In 1920, Soviet Russia, using detachments of the Red Army, occupied Azerbaijan and Armenia, abolished these independent states, and established soviet socialist republics, subordinated to the Kremlin. Now the question of Georgia appeared to be on the agenda. It would be difficult for Russia to retain the Northern Caucasus, Armenia and Azerbaijan if Georgia was not sovietized. It would be impossible to take oil out of Baku and, what is more, to get into the East towards which the direction of the proletarian revolution was pointed.

Russia prepared the attack on Georgia from the diplomatic angle as well as from military and political ones. Having restored the commercial and economic relations with England, Moscow got the permission from this country to act as she liked in the Southern Caucasus, and by ceding a certain territory of the region to Kemal, she acquired Turkey's consent to neutrality.

The Kremlin had restrained itself from inflicting a decisive blow before it managed to settle these questions. They warned the Caucasian bureau of Russia's Communist party and its leader S. Orjonikidze not to aggravate the situation by trying to hasten things. Having achieved practical isolation of the victim, set as an object by it, there was no obstacle before Russia, and it began to act. Lenin did not wait for the "inner explosion" in Georgia that turned out to be hopeless and ordered to start warfare against it. Additional military forces were gathered in the Northern Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Armenia. They needed only a pretext to invade Georgia. It was not difficult for the Bolsheviks to find it. They planned to arrange "an uprising of Georgia's working people" in the neutral zone of Lore of the Borchalo District before February 13, 1921. The government formed by the insurgents was to request assistance of Soviet Russia.

The time and place for the staged uprising was specially selected. Lore was declared a neutral zone as early as at the beginning of the 1919 when the war between Armenia and Georgia ended. The question to whom this territory belonged was supposed to be decided either by the Paris conference or by international arbitration. The conference was over, but the representatives of the allied countries had not discussed the question of Lore, neither the arbitration had been held. The district was governed by a mixed Georgian-Armenian administration. In November 1920 the Georgian and Armenian governments agreed that the Georgian army would be deployed in Lore, for at this time Armenia was



defending her territory from the Turks' attacks. If the question of frontiers was not decided during this time, status quo was to be restored.

The majority of the population of the neutral zone was non-Georgian. This circumstance enhanced the chances of provoking the uprising. There was only one drawback, all this was to be arranged before February 13. On that day, the time of the presence of the Georgian troops in Lore was coming to an end.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia was ordered to stage the uprising.

On February 11, 1921 a staged uprising began in the villages inhabited by Armenian and Russian colonists. It was declared that it was a rebellion of the Georgian working people against the government. In reality, the Russian military units that were encamped in Armenia, invaded the Borchalo District, attacking the Democratic Republic of Georgia. A few days later the Red Army crossed Georgia's frontiers from Azerbaijan. The commander of the army had received an instruction from Lenin himself to seize Tbilisi. Herewith, to mask the open aggression against a sovereign country they were to pass it for the defense of the rebellious population.

Soon Russia's Eighth and Ninth Armies started for Georgia via the Dariali and Mamisoni Passes, and another, the Thirteenth Army was moving towards Tbilisi from the Abkhazian coastal line.

The Kremlin demanded a guarantee of a quick and complete victory from the Caucasian Bureau and the Military-Revolutionary Council of the Caucasian front, for the procrastination of the matter might cause complications of an international character.

Georgia's revolutionary committee, whose members were Ph. Makharadze, M. Orakhelashvili, A. Gegechkori and others, was established in Shulaveri on February 16, 1921 to direct the "uprising". Not a single member of this provisional government, which was formed in the Kremlin, was in the region of the "uprising" at that time. In spite of this fact a request of the assistance, signed by the Revolutionary Committee was sent to Moscow on February 16.

The above-mentioned request of the Revolutionary Committee was considered a legal foundation of the invasion of Georgia by the Red Army. Let alone the illegitimacy of the Bolshevik Revolutionary Committee, the absurdity of this event is proved by the fact that this request itself had been compiled post factum, i.e. after these Soviet armies had penetrated into the depths of the country and were already very near the capital.

The ambassador of Russia — A. Sheinmann, who knew everything — declared that the Kremlin did not participate in these affairs. It was a conflict between Armenia and Georgia and Russia could be only a mediator between the parties to stop the hostilities.

The head of the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia — N. Zhordania sent a telegram to Chicherin — Russia's People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs: "What do you demand of us? Inform us of the reasons of the war. We may come to an agreement without bloodshed". There was no answer to the telegram. Noe Zhordania's attempt to get in touch with Lenin and Trotski was also of no avail.

On February 16, 1921 Georgia's government published an address "To everybody, everybody, everybody". It was as follows: "The Soviet government of Russia is committing an unprecedented crime in the world. Having violated all the agreements concluded with us, it has decided to do away with our liberty, our sovereignty by means of military



force!" The Constituent Assembly declared the members of the Revolutionary Committee to be traitors of the country and appealed to the whole nation to defend their motherland and rescue its liberty and sovereignty.

At first, the Red Army achieved significant success, but it was unable to take Tbilisi by February 19th as planned. Georgia's government, somewhat late, still took special steps, declared mobilization, regrouped the military detachments and put a new commander-in-chief – General Giorgi Kvinitadze at the head of the army.

On February 18, Georgian military forces defeated the adversary at the approaches to Tbilisi, made it retreat and took more than a thousand Red Army men prisoner. The Georgian detachments got the upper hand of the enemy once more in the fight near the village of Kojori on February 20th. The cadets of Tbilisi military school distinguished themselves in the fighting particularly. The soldiers of people's guards and Georgian army bravely fought side by side with the cadets. They put up a valiant resistance to the hordes of additional forces of the enemy till February 24th.

On February 24th a decision of leaving Tbilisi, retreating towards Mtskheta was taken. The government of Georgia moved to Western Georgia.

On February 25th, 1921 the Eleventh Red Army occupied Tbilisi. S. Orjonikidze who was in Baku at that time sent a telegram to the Kremlin, informing them that the red banner of the Soviet power was flying over Tbilisi.

After leaving Tbilisi the defense system of the country was broken. It became impossible to stop the Soviet armies at Surami.

Turkey also created a hopeless situation for Georgia. Instead of helping Georgia, her military detachments expressed a wish of occupying Ajara and Batumi. In such a situation the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia thought it better to conclude peace with the Bolsheviks.

The talks took place in Kutaisi on March 17-18, 1921. The deputy-chairman of the government and the Minister of Defence — G. Lortkipanidze — represented Georgia's government. M. Orakhelashvili represented the Revolutionary Committee. A. Enukidze, who spoke on behalf of Russia, conducted the meeting. The military actions ended because of the agreement they reached.

At the negotiations, G. Lortkipanidze considered maintaining Georgia's territorial integrity to be the most important question. His request was that Batumi should not be given to the Turks and that some joint means should be found to liberate the town.

As for the Bolsheviks, their main task was to persuade the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Georgia to capitulate. If the government officially declared their resignation and recognized Soviet power and the Constituent Assembly voluntarily gave up their plenary power all this would forestall Russia's aggression. What would take place would be called a legitimate change of government instead of the overthrow of the sovereign state by violence and Georgia's Revolutionary Committee would become a legal successor of the Social Democratic government.

Grigol Lortkipanidze categorically rejected this offer. The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia preferred emigration to surrender and would continue fighting for the liberation of the country abroad. The Constituent Assembly of Georgia gave a corresponding mandate to the government emigrating.



The Revolutionary Committee, instructed by Lenin, tried to win Noe Zhordania over to their side, but their offer was rejected. They were unable to capture him either. The persecuted government of the Republic of Georgia left their mother country on March 17, 1921, and emigrated. The detachments of the Georgian army drove the Turks out of the country without the Bolsheviks' help. It was the last victory won under the banner of the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

On March 18, 1921 Soviet troops entered Batumi, and Red Army completed the occupation of Georgia. Soviet regime was established in the whole country. In reality it meant Russia's return to Georgia.

The Democratic Republic of Georgia had not properly prepared for the war with Soviet Russia. The Social-Democratic government had still expected support from the Western countries and had had an illusion that Bolshevik Russia would not attack Georgia.

The leaders of the Democratic Republic of Georgia did not manage to revive a fighting spirit in the population of Georgia. It is true that no bullet was shot in the rear of the government, retreating from Tbilisi, and Georgia's population remained loyal to the government, but the absolute majority of the people did not raise a gun to repulse the invading enemy. Many of them did not even fully realize that the aggressor was going to take their native land away from them and what was happening was not a mere fight for power between Bolshevism and Menshevism. This was the reason, alongside other objective factors, that made it easy for Russia to conquer Georgia a second time.

Georgian Culture in the First Two Decades of the Twentieth Century

Education

No essential changes took place in the life of the Georgian people at the beginning of the twentieth century. Before the autocracy was overthrown, the country had remained under the colonial yoke that was clearly reflected in its life and culture. Alongside taking care of people's spiritual development there were other tasks facing culture. They were retaining national identity and preparing the nation for liberty. The Georgian culture was full of national ideals and its aim was to realize these ideals.

One of the main tasks of the national culture was the education of the people and the development of their consciousness. People's education had never been a sphere of top priority for the imperial government of Russia. The Tsarism was still less interested in spreading education in peripheral colonial regions. However the social progress, the necessity of having educated officials and professionals, made it urgent to have more schools and educational institutions. According to the statistics, the number of elementary schools in Georgia increased four times from 1901 to 1915, though it still did not satisfy the growing demands of the population. Two thirds of children of the corresponding age remained beyond schools.

The activities of the society for spreading literacy among Georgians were of great importance for improving the situation. This society opened Georgian schools at their



own expense both in Georgia and beyond its borders (Vladikavkaz, Armavir, Yerevan, and Baku), published textbooks in the native language, etc.

The number of secondary schools – gymnasiums – was small. A higher educational institution did not exist at all. The system of education was turned into a powerful mechanism of Russification. Subjects were taught in Russian in state gymnasiums. The national language was very often excluded from elementary schools as well. Georgian teachers were dismissed from educational institutions. Russian and Russian-speaking teachers occupied their places.

The local government of the Caucasus again tried to root the Georgian language out of the schools of Abkhazia, Samegrelo and Ajara, and to introduce teaching in Russian by force. The Georgian society answered these insidious plans with strong protests. It must be noted that Russia's democratic intelligentsia supported the idea of getting an education in one's native language. The first congress of all Russia's teachers, held at the end of 1912, declared teaching in people's native languages in elementary and secondary schools to be one of the main principles of people's education. It was not easy to put this principle into practice. Georgian teachers and other prominent representatives of intelligentsia had to do their best to achieve it. In this respect one must specially mention distinguished teachers such as L. Botsvadze, S. Gorgadze, D. Karichashvili, N. Lomouri, I. Otskheli, T. Razikashvili, I. Rostomashvili, T. Zhordania, S. Khundadze and others. They continued the traditions of I. Gogebashvili, I. Tsinamdzgvrishvili and others, preparing the foundation for a new national educational system. Its establishment became possible for a short period only after the Georgian statehood had been restored. The process of complete reforming people's education began. It was founded on democratic principles, on the experience of the West, and on new methods of teaching. With the purpose of carrying out a united educational policy, all educational institutions were made part of one system and subordinated to the Ministry of Education. A three-stage school education was established: people's school, highest elementary and secondary school. All state secondary schools became of the same type.

One-hundred and fifty six new elementary schools began to function at the beginning of the 1919-1920 school year. Scores of Abkhazian, Ossetian, Armenian, Russian, Tatar, Greek, and German schools started to operate. Local elective district councils and town self-government bodies were to take care of arranging schools and covering their expenses. Teaching programs and plans were worked out for elementary schools, new textbooks were published, short-term courses for training teachers began to work, etc.

The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia made it their aim to have a general, free and compulsory education and started to realize this program. Herewith, great attention was paid to exterminating illiteracy in the population in general. Sunday and mobile schools, evening courses, book depositories, libraries, and reading rooms were opened. The network of people's universities and teachers was expanded. 4.7% of the state budget was apportioned for the necessity of education (in 1919 this sum equaled 37.5 million roubles). The civil sector that was at the stage of being formed also shared the care for the education of the future generation together with the state. The following societies were founded: A Society for Assisting Indigent Students, The Foundation of the Society for Assisting Students, etc.



Professional and technical schools were established with the purpose of the economic development of the country and strengthening its defense potential, among them Tbilisi military school and Poti naval schools.

The development of Georgian culture was mostly determined by the national university. Its foundation is connected with the name of the well-known Georgian scholar Ivane Javakhishvili. Tbilisi University was founded on January 26, 1918, as a private higher educational institution. It had happened before Georgia's independence was restored. It was given the status of a state university in September 1918. The Democratic Republic of Georgia undertook the financial support of the University. Concerning the teaching and scientific activities or management the University had full autonomy.

A distinguished chemist, Professor Petre Melikishvili, was elected the first rector of the University. Well-known scholars and scientists P. Melikishvili, I. Javakhishvili, E. Takaishvili, Sh. Nutsubidze, A. Shanidze, Ph. Gogichaishvili, and others were members of the scientific board. At the beginning, the State University had one department — the department of philosophy — but later on, the departments of mathematics, natural science, medicine and agronomy were added to it. A teacher-training institute was established based on the University in 1919.

In spite of the fact that a great national centre of the higher education, culture and science was established in Georgia in the form of a university, the Ministry of education sent 75 young Georgians to western countries to enrich their education. Many of them became acknowledged scientists and public figures.

Science

There were no conditions for scientific work in Georgia at the beginning of the twentieth century either. The metropolis artificially restricted the development of science in its colonies. Nevertheless, some enthusiast scholars and scientists managed to carry out research work, writing and publishing important works.

The main trend of the national science was in the humanities. The study of the history of Georgia, Georgian literature, or the history of public thinking, expressed the aspiration of the nation as it fought for freedom.

In 1907, Georgia's historic and ethnographic society was founded on the initiative of Ekvtime Takaishvili. A wide circle of Georgian public figures became its members. This society took care of the Georgian cultural heritage, collected national antiquities, unique manuscripts, numismatic, folklore, ethnological and archaeological materials, building a solid foundation for further scholarly research. A three-volume work *Georgia's Antiquities* and a four - volume collection *Ancient Georgia* are noteworthy among the publications of the society.

The historic and ethnographic society arranged several scientific expeditions in Svaneti, Racha-Lechkhumi, and Samegrelo. The 1917 expedition in Southern Georgia was of a special significance. It was guided by E. Takaishvili and was dedicated to the study of the monuments of the Georgian culture in Tao-Klarjeti. The members of the expedition described and took photos of Oshki, Ishkhani, Khakhuli cathedrals, documenting these churches for us, etc.



St. Petersburg's Kartvelological school continued fruitful work. Aleksandre Tsagareli and Niko Marr headed it. Niko Marr conducted an exhaustive study of the ancient Georgian literature, the history of Georgia, and the problems of culture. It was reflected in his numerous publications. In 1906, N. Marr drew up a plan for the foundation of Georgia's Academy of Sciences, but this initiative was not realized.

A distinguished historian and the founder of the Georgian University, Ivane Javakhishvili, worked in St. Petersburg. His fundamental research (*The History of the Georgian Nation and Ancient Georgian Historic Literature*) laid a foundation for the new stage of the development of the Georgian historiography. I. Javakhishvili studied Georgia's past from every aspect: social, political, economic, legal, cultural, etc. By the exhaustive study of questions, the scholar revealed the high level of the Georgian civilization and substantiated its historic significance for the world.

Tedo Zhordania, Ekvtime Takaishvili, Mose Janashvili, Sargis Kakabadze and others played an important part in the development of national scholarship. They discovered and published a great number of historical monuments. Sergi Gorgadze, Kita Abashdze, Komeli Kekelidze, Archil Jorjadze, David Karichashvili wrote noteworthy works on the history of Georgia, Georgian literature, the history of literature, on the questions of public thinking. Aleksandre Javakhishvili published several books on Georgia's Anthropography.

Societies of oriental studies, technical, agricultural, juridical societies, existing and functioning in Russia or in the whole of the Caucasus were of certain significance for the development of science in Georgia or for the popularization of some of its branches. In 1916, a society of doctors and scientists was founded and in 1917 the Caucasian Historical-Archaeological Institute was established.

A particular development of Georgian culture and science was conditioned by founding Tbilisi University in 1918. Kartvelology, mathematics, geology, psychology, national scientific schools were established and became well known in the world.

Press and Publicism

In 1900-1920 Georgian periodicals became diverse in genre and themes and significantly expanded. Party press, religious, satiric and humorous, pedagogical, scientific, etc. newspapers and magazines were added to social-political, literary, economic, and children's publications. Apart from Tbilisi and Kutaisi, periodical press was published in Batumi, Gori, Zestaponi, Samtredia, Poti, and Signaghi. In 1903-1905 the newspaper *Sakartvelo* (Georgia) was published in Paris, and in 1913-1914 the magazine *Tavisupali Sakartvelo* (Free Georgia) was published in Geneva. In 1916-1918 the *Georgian Gazette* was published in Berlin.

The difference from foreign publications was that the freedom of printed word in Georgia was restricted. The first revolution in Russia somewhat relieved the situation of the press, but only for a short time. After the revolution was defeated, censorship was again restored. Its vigilant eye would hardly miss the idea harmful and unacceptable for the autocracy. In spite of the strict censorship, the Georgian newspapers and magazines were the tribune of expressing different thinking and the important arena of social-political activities. The national press woke up the dormant life of society; the party publications



made the active forces of society still more active and rallied them to fight for social and national freedom. The reader avidly read the articles full of publicist zeal, informational, cognitive and other publications.

At the beginning of the twentieth century *Kvali* (*Track*) was still published (up to 1904), *Iveria* and *Tsnobis Purtseli* (*A Sheet of News*) (up to 1906). Others followed these newspapers. The main publications of the Social-democratic (Menshevik) trend were the newspapers *Skhivi* (*Beam*), *Tsin* (*Forward*), *Lampari* (*A Lamp*), *Tskaro* (*Spring*), *Azri* (*Idea*), *Alioni* (*Dawn*), *Khalkhis Tavisupleba* (*People's Liberty*), *Ertoba* (*Unity*), etc. *Brdzola* (*Struggle*), *Brdzolis Purtseli* (*A Sheet about Struggle*), *Elva* (*Lightning*), *Akhali Tskhovreba* (*New Life*), *Mgzavri* (*Traveler*), *Komunisti* (*Communist*), etc. were Bolsheviks' publications. The Federalist Party published the following newspapers: *Shroma* (*Labor*), *Glekhi* (*Peasant*), *Megobari* (*Friend*), *Isari* (*Arrow*), *Sakhalkho Gazeti* (*People's Newspaper*), *Sakhalkho Purtseli* (*People's Sheet*), etc. The National-Democrats founded the magazines – *Eri* (*Nation*), and *Klde* (*Rock*), newspapers *Samshoblo* (*The Mother-Country*), *Tchveni Kveqana* (*Our Country*), *Sakartvelo* (*Georgia*), etc.

Numerous Russian and Armenian press was printed in Georgia, a French illustrated magazine *Le Caucase Illustre* and the German *Kaukasische Post* were published here. In 1919-1920 newspapers in French (*Union Libre*, *La Georgie Independente*, *La Republique Geogienne*) and in English (*The Georgian Mail*, *The Georgian Messenger*) were published in Tbilisi. A newspaper *Apsni* in the Abkhazian language appeared in free Georgia.

The main party publications, while the Democratic Republic of Georgia existed, were as follows: a social-democratic *Ertoba* (*Unity*) – a semi-official organ, the Federalists' *Sakhalkho Sakme* (*People's Pursuit*) and *Sakartvelo* (*Georgia*) of the National-Democrats. In 1918 the government's newspaper – *Sakartvelos Respublica* (*The Republic of Georgia*) was founded. The union of elective district councils *Kalaki da Eroba* – (The city and the elective district council) also had its newspaper, Georgia's parliament and the Constituent Assembly also published stenographic reports, etc.

Literature

Literature was a great leader of the renovation of the Georgian culture. Fiction still played the main part in the spiritual life of the nation.

The venerable cohort of the *Tergdaleulni* continued active literary and public work at the beginning of the new century as well. Of these people Ilia Chavchavadze was assassinated in 1907, Iakob Gogebashvili died in 1912, in 1915 Vazha-Pshavela breathed his last. In the very same year Akaki's lyre stopped playing. In spite of such a loss in such a short period, the arena of the national literature did not remain empty. The following generation occupied their places on the Georgian Parnassus. Many of them were distinguished by their ideological closeness with the progressive European art.

It must be noted that this creative new generation did not forget their origin, did not lose contact with their national roots and did not betray the great tradition of Georgian literature. The writers of this generation, having received their education in Russian or



Western universities, greatly broadened the horizon of literature, giving a new dimension to the Georgian prose and poetry.

Vasil Barnov, Shio Aragvispireli, Anastasia Eristav-Khoshtaria, David Kldiashvili, Kondrate Tatarashvili, Shalva Dadiani, Chola Lomtadize and others were well-known and famous writers of those days. Their names are indivisible from the literature of their native country, but the renovation of the Georgian literature is connected with the circle of young authors whose members were Niko Lortkipanidze, Mikheil Javakhishvili, Leo Kiacheli, Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, Grigol Robakidze, Galaktion and Titsian Tabidzes, Paolo Iashvili, Valerian Gaprindashvili, Giorgi Leonidze and others.

Niko Lortkipanidze's highly artistic prose broadened the boundaries of the Georgian literature. His first impressionistic works reflected the writer's spiritual world; they showed us the author's subjective feelings and impressions in the modern style. Niko Lortkipanidze's miniatures and short stories are characterized by laconic phrases, unusual lyricism, depth and simplicity. Niko Lortkipanidze's stories and novels are distinguished by the precision of composition, the lucidity of ideas, profundity and the originality of the forms of expression *The Knights, Hard Times, The Unconquerable*. The reader appreciated them at once.

Mikheil Javakhishvili revealed the fate of the poor people, rejected by society, against the background of the vices of the existing reality, in his first stories "Chanchura", "Eka", "Boot-maker Gabo" and others. Many of the writer's works are permeated by respect for a person, the support of a fellow being, protest against insulting personal dignity. In some of his works, M. Javakhishvili expertly described the theme of revolution and depicted the dramatic scenes of fighting for freedom (*Award, People's Justice*). M. Javakhishvili's national and publicistic work must be specially mentioned. Due to this he was persecuted by the government.

The early works of Leo Kiacheli were characterized by impressionistic motifs. The main characters of his short stories are ugly, sick people who, as if inspired by "the divine power", see the "highest world" better than the others. Kiacheli's many characters are nihilists, others are skeptics and they see life and themselves as ghosts ("The Children of Sin," "Life"). The writer, being an active participant of the revolutionary movement, soon abandoned his symbolical fantasies and in 1916 wrote an extremely realistic novel *Tariel Golua*. This novel describes the peripeteias of Russia's 1905 revolution against the background of a village in Samegrelo.

Konstantine Gamsakhurdia stood at the head of the innovation of the Georgian prose. In his short stories an expressionistic outlook is felt. He was the first writer to introduce the theme of a person's alienation, etc. into the Georgian literature. Later on K. Gamsakhurdia became one of the founders of the Georgian historical novel.

The first-foreshooters of modernism in the Georgian poetry were Sandro Shanshiashvili, Aleksandre Abasheli and Ioseb Grishashvili. In some of their poems, published in the Georgian press, one can see a great influence of symbolism. They are carried away by the ideas of decadence. However, the Georgian symbolism was born in Kutaisi. In 1916 an avant-garde group of writers was established – "Blue Horns" (a horn that is used for drinking wine in Georgia is meant. Transl.). As Grigol Robakidze said, the members of this group had first "agitated Kutaisi", "turned its shops into Parisian literary cafes" and spread throughout Georgia with "the flood of their verses".





The members of this group were Paolo Iashvili, Titsian Tabidze, Valerian Gaprindashvili, Kolau Nadiradze, etc. Their first verses were published on the pages of the periodical press. In 1916 the Georgian symbolists published their own magazine "Blue horns", and in 1918 founded another magazine *Dreaming Gazelles*.

The transfiguration of Georgian poetic culture is connected with the names of the members of this group. It is they who had turned the Georgian poetry towards "the European radius" (T. Tabidze).

The creative work of the Blue Horners is characterized by bohemian artistry. The world of their poetry is visionary, it is full of mysticism and mystery; as for phantoms, somebody's doubles, ghosts, it did not represent the new virtual reality, it created it. Herewith, in the process of symbolical quest different expressive forms of the artistic word were created and refined, the Georgian verse acquired modern sonority.

Georgian symbolists have a significant share in the development of versification. It was they who inculcated a triolet, sonnet, vers libre, etc. in the literature of their country.

Galaktion Tabidze was a great innovator of the Georgian verse. He not only introduced a new form into the Georgian poetic culture, but revealed its deepest spiritual layers with a new splendor. Man's purest feelings are expressed with a wonderful sincerity and beauty in his lyrical verses. His poetry is distinguished by a particular refinement, a sweet, refined melodiousness.

Galaktion Tabidze's poetic images are based on biblical-mythological sources. However, the main source of his inspiration was his native country. As he himself wrote, "it was the Georgian sun and the Georgian word that tormented him till his death". The first book of his verses was published in 1914. Readers welcomed it with admiration. However, the collection — "Artistic flowers", published in 1919, gained him general recognition. The masterpieces of this collection — "Night and me" "Without love", "Grey horses", etc. — are the pride and beauty of Georgian poetry.

The appearance of political parties and organizations resulted in the polarization of society. It is natural that this reality should have found its reflection in literature. In the first two decades of the twentieth century literary trends, differing not only by their philosophic or artistic and aesthetic outlook, but also by their ideological points of view co-existed in the Georgian literature. An example of this phenomenon is the uniting of the authors — followers of the Third Estate — around social-democratic publications. The motifs of irreconcilability with the existing system, of social justice and equality, of class struggle were the most important for the writers and poets of this trend. They were mainly interested in social themes (Irodion Evdoshvili, Giorgi Kuchishvili, Noe Chkhivadze and others). Their works lacked artistic perfection, but they were distinguished by sincerity, frankness, and strong revolutionary enthusiasm.

The writers' union — a creative union of Georgian authors — was established in 1917. Poet Kote Makashvili was elected its first president.

The jubilees of elderly writers — Vasil Barnov and David Kldiashvili were celebrated on the initiative of the Writers' Union and the support of the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. In 1920, the Day of Poetry was established and a special newspaper, dedicated to this day was issued and so on.



Fine arts

Georgian cultural environment of the first two decades of the twentieth century turned out to be ready to receive and share the novelties of the advanced European art. Maintaining the traditional national form and its merging into modern aesthetic demands was becoming the determining mark of the Georgian art.

Painting was most noticeably developing among all other branches of fine arts at this time. Representatives of the new generation were added to the ranks of Georgian painters in this period. Talented young artists-Mose Toidze, David Kakabadze, Lado Gudiashvili, Dimitri Shevardnadze, Valerian Sidamon-Eristavi, Shalva Kikodze and others appeared beside such recognized masters of painting as A. Beridze, G. Gabashvili and A. Mrevlishvili were.

Niko Pirosmashvili's (Pirosmani's) works must be specially mentioned. This self-taught painter, who usually painted the signs for Tbilisi wine cellars and shops to order, was also the author of town landscapes, portraits, still lives that were unique specimens of art. Pirosmani's canvases of the animalistic genre (*A Deer*, *A Giraffe*) and other pictures (*A Yard Keeper*, *A Childless Millionaire* and *a Poor Woman with a Child*) are distinguished by their natural spontaneity and expressiveness.

The painter Mose Toidze made a name for himself in the 1900-s by participating in various exhibitions. In his heritage the theme of every-day life and the historic-revolutionary subject dominate ("Mtskheta holiday", etc). His pictures are particularly characterized by the dynamism of the composition and picturesqueness. Mose Toidze painted the portraits of the Georgian writers-Shota Rustaveli, Aleksandre Kazbegi, Ilia Chavchavadze, Akaki Tsereteli and others.

David Kakabadze's works are distinguished by a variety of styles and trends. They are impressively decorative, and are characterized by refined and vivid colors. His picture "Imereti-my mother" is universally known. In it an allegoric figure of an old woman is depicted against the background of the Imereti landscape. David Kakabadze also did research work-he studied art. His work on the genesis of the Georgian ornament is noteworthy; the same can be said about his publications on the subject of avant-garde art, etc.

Lado Gudiashvili is a prominent representative of the painters of the new generation. That he became a great master was due to the influence of the specimens of the old Georgian mural painting and the Georgian and Persian miniature. Gudiashvili began his creative work by making copies of Georgian frescos and illustrating books. The painter's favorite subject was Tbilisi. He painted Tbilisi fantasies, colorful images of *kintos* and *karachokhelis* (*kinto* - a man, selling fruit and vegetables in old Tbilisi, dressed in characteristic clothes; *karachokheli* - a petty trader or artisan, distinguished by his dignified behavior), the scenes of their life or the scenes of bohemian life (*Debauchees in a Carriage*, *After a Feast*).

In 1919, the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia sent David Kakabadze, Lado Gudiashvili and Shalva Kikodze to Paris to study. The pictures of young Georgian painters were highly estimated by the French art critics.

Madrid's national museum Prado bought two pictures by Gudiashvili from the exhibition arranged in Paris.



The works of the sculptor Iakob Nikoladze became more refined and expressive. In 1904-1908 Iakob Nikoladze developed his skill in Paris under the supervision of Auguste Rodin. He got acquainted with the European trends of his branch of art of those days and studied them. It was in Rodin's studio that he finished his sculptures *Salome*, *The Wind*, *The Daughter of the North*, etc.

Having returned to his home country, the artist created a wonderful monument-“Grieving Georgia”. It was erected on Ilia Chavchavadze's grave in Mtatsminda Pantheon in 1913. Iakob Nikoladze also drew Georgia's tricolor flag.

Tbilisi art school (founded in 1901) did its share in developing fine arts in Georgia, the same was done by The Society of Georgian Artists, established in 1916. In 1919, a grand exhibition was arranged in Tbilisi, called “Modern Georgian art and sculpture.” About 280 pictures of 15 Georgian artists were displayed at the exhibition. The best pictures were bought by the state for the national gallery that was founded at the beginning of the following year. The Picture Gallery was supervised by one of the initiators of its founding – Dimitri Shevardnadze.

Interesting exhibitions were opened in Kutaisi and Poti as well. In 1919, an artistic society was founded in Kutaisi that was given the name of the Georgian Artists' Society later on.

From 1919, periodic mobile expositions were organized in Georgia's towns on Mose Toidze's initiative.

Architecture

The aspiration to revive Georgian motifs in architecture becomes noticeable from the beginning of the twentieth century, though it was still difficult to practically realize it. It was possible to use a national element as a decoration of buildings, for the imperial power did not allow architects to do more than that.

Eclecticism dominated in the Tbilisi architecture as well as in the architecture of the big cities of Russia's central regions (*gubernias*). A great part of the buildings of those days is characterized by the diversity of styles. The building of the Actors' Society (today's Opera House) whose construction was completed in 1901 is a good example of it.

The People's house of the brothers Zubalashvili (today's Kote Marjanishvili Theatre) is built in modernistic style, so are the office of the State Bank (the third building of the National Library today), the cinema theater “Apollo”, etc. Churches, built in 1900-1904 are of a Russian form and have no artistic value.

The building of the Georgian gymnasium for nobility (the first building of I. Javakhishvili University today) shows the revival of the national tradition in architecture. It was built in 1902-1906. Its architect-Simon Kldiashvili was the first professional Georgian architect with a European academic education.

The plan for the Museum of the Society to Spread Literacy Among Georgians, drawn in 1912, is characterized by a clearly Georgian style, but was not realized.

In 1916 a building, having a clearly expressed Georgian character, was added to Tbilisi. The manorial bank of the nobility found its abode in it (Today it is the first building of the National Library). The authors of the building are-architect A. Kalgin and painter. H.



Hrinevsky. The ornament belongs to Theopilakte Agladze and his brothers. Kashueti Church is a specimen of the renaissance of the national architectural style. It fully repeats the structure of the eleventh century monument, the Samtavisi church. Kashueti is decorated by a refined Georgian ornament, incomparable and also made by T. Agladze.

We come across Georgian motifs in some other buildings belonging to the state, but it was mostly the architecture of private houses that retained the national character. In this respect Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Telavi and Signaghi were especially distinguished among them.

Theater and Cinematography

Theater played a great part in the development of Georgian culture. The stage reflected people's national ideals, inculcated the spirit of freedom, instilled hope and belief in a better future. There were professional theaters in Kutaisi and Batumi besides Tbilisi. People's theaters appeared in almost all the towns of Georgia. They also did great cultural and educational work. Georgian, Russian and Armenian companies functioned side by side in the People's House, built by the Zubalashvilis (today Kote Marjanishvili State Theater).

Almost every season in the Tbilisi Drama Theater was opened by D. Eristavi's play *Samshoblo* (Motherland). A. Sumbatashvili-Yuzhin's play *Treason (Galati)* also was a permanent item on the repertoire. At different times the main parts in both plays were played by Vladimir Alexi-Meskhishvili (Lado Meskhishvili), Valerian Gunia, Aleksandre Imedashvili and others. Apart from a matchless performance of the actors, the permanent success and the long run of these performances were also determined by the national motif of the plays. The performances, permeated by sharp protest against injustice, were also liked by the theater-goers. They corresponded with the people's mood. Performances of the comic genre were popular with the spectators too, for instance G. Eristavi's *Separation*, A. Tsagareli's *Khanuma*, *You will never again see what you have seen*, G. Sundukiants' *Pepo*, etc.

Kutaisi was an important center of theatrical culture. A well-known Georgian actor – Lado Meskhishvili had worked there since the end of the nineteenth century. Among his numerous parts and performances the tragedy *Gaius Gracchus* by the Italian playwright I. Monty was considered to be the best.

The works by Shakespeare, Schiller, Moliere, Ibsen, N. Gogol, A. Tchekhov, M. Gorky and others were successfully staged in Georgian theaters. A brilliant galaxy of actors was added to the old generation of famous actors-these were Taso Abashidze, Giorgi Aradel-Ishkhneli, Aleksandre Imedashvili, Nutsa Chkheidze, Niko Gvaradze and others. Professional producers appeared in the theater arena. These were Aleksandre Tsutsunava, Valerian Shalikhishvili, Mikheil Koreli, Akaki Pagava, Konstantine Andronikashvili, Sandro Akhmeteli.

In 1917 Giorgi Jabadari founded a studio, attached to the Georgian Drama Society. It was in this very studio that the brilliant actors and actresses-Veriko Anjaparidze, Tsatsa Amirejibi, Mikheil Gelovani, Akaki Vasadze, Yuza Zardalishvili, and others made their first steps. They created incomparable images on the stage.



Not a single prominent performance lacked theatrical criticism. Apart from central newspapers, reviews were published in Georgian art magazines *Theater and Life*, *Theater and Music*.

National statehood having been restored, a new stage began in the life of the Georgian theater. If up to that period theater had been a tribune for the struggle for freedom, now it had to think more of the quality of performances, of the aesthetics of art, etc. The process of quest, begun in the first decade of the twentieth century, was still going on in the theater. The actor's theater gradually turned into a producer's theater.

In the period of the existence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia a question of delivering the theater into the hands of the state was raised. The art committee of the Constituent Assembly specially discussed this subject with the Union of Theater Workers in the autumn of 1919. The majority of the people present at this discussion were against this idea, thinking that this fact would impede the free development of theatrical art. In their opinion, the duty of the state should only be financial support.

The government helped theaters and actors' companies as much as they could. In 1920, the Georgian drama society was given the building of the former Artistic Society (today's Shota Rustaveli State Theater), buildings for theaters were built in Telavi, Surami and Samtredia, jubilee evening parties were arranged in honor of the famous actors-Vaso Abashidze, Valerian Gunia, Mako Saparova-Abashidze. A lottery was held in favor of the theater, "Georgian actors' day" was celebrated, etc.

Creating a Georgian drama theatre by uniting the drama company and the actors of Jabadari's studio was a noteworthy event. It was given the status of a state theater in 1920.

From the very outset of the twentieth century the interest in the cinema art was growing day by day. At first only the Tbilisi spectators were able to see films, but gradually cinema theaters were opened in almost all important big towns and small towns. In 1912 only in Kutaisi there were three cinema theaters.

The development of Georgian cinematography began with shooting documentary films. Vasil Amashukeli turned out to be the founder of this new genre of art. He mastered the profession of a director of photography in Moscow. As for the first films, he shot them independently in Baku in 1908. Having returned to his home country, he worked in Kutaisi, shot documentary sequences and made documentary shorts.

In 1912 V. Amashukeli finished one of the unique masterpieces of the world documentary cinema of those days — "*Akaki's Travels about Racha-Lechkhumi*". The film was distinguished by both-its professional level and its footage (1200 meters) and gave an impressive picture of the Georgian people's love for their poet.

The first Georgian feature film — *Christine* — was made in 1916. It was shot by Aleksandre Tsutsunava on the basis of the story by Egnate Ninoshvili, having the same title. Besides V. Amashukeli and A. Tsutsunava, Aleksandre Digmelov, Germane Gogitidze and Shalva Dadiani were pioneers of the Georgian cinematography too.

After Georgia's state independence had been restored, a Georgian cinematographic society was established, several film studios were built, etc. In 1919 Georgia's government apportioned 13 million roubles with the purpose of developing cinema art. In the period of the existence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia the following documentary films were shot: *The Holiday of the People's Guards*, *The opening of the Constituent Assembly*, *The Socialist Delegation of Europe in Georgia*, etc.

Music

The development of the Georgian musical art is connected with a general development of Georgia's spiritual culture. At the boundary of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Meliton Balanchivadze, Dimitri Arakishvili, Ia Kargareteli, Zakaria Paliashvili and others represented a newly established school of national composers. They laid the foundation for Georgian classical music which originated on the basis of the artistic generalization of century-long traditions of the national folk-lore. The share of the opera theatre in the formation of the professional musical culture is also significant. Masterpieces of Rossini, Donizetti, Verdi and other classics were staged in the Tbilisi Opera-House.

Collecting, recording, and studying musical folk-lore - folk songs, and church hymns gained a wide scope. The Georgian Philharmonic Society, founded in 1905 and The Georgian Musical Society, established later, served the development and dissemination of the Georgian music. They took care of establishing music schools and studios, publishing musical works, arranging concerts, etc.

Romantic and choral music were the most popular kinds of vocal music in Georgia. Besides M. Balanchivadze, Ia Kargareteli ("*Aragvi*", "Queen of beauties"), Dimitri Arakishvili ("I'm Waiting for You", "One Starry Night"), Andria Karashvili ("You Again", "A Bedridden Sick Man"), Kote Potskhverashvili ("*Lale*", "*Indi-mindi*"), Zakaria Paliashvili ("Go to Sleep, Child") worked in the genre of romance.

Niko Sulkhaniashvili was the composer who laid a foundation for choral music. His songs "*Mestviruli*" ("A Piper's Song"), "*Gutmurt*" ("A Ploughman's Song"), and "God, oh God" are classical specimens of this genre.

N. Sulkhaniashvili himself was a brilliant singer and a conductor of a folk choir. Well-known choirs were led by Sandro Kavsadze, Avksenti Megreliдзе, Dzuku Lolua and others.

The evolution of the vocal music assisted the development of the opera art. The first Georgian opera, staged in Tbilisi, was composer Revaz Gogniashvili's *Christine* (June 1918). In 1919 the Tbilisi Opera-House staged D. Arakishvili's opera *A Legend about Shota Rustaveli*. It was produced by A. Tsutsunava and the main parts were performed by V. Sarajishvili and S. Inashvili.

Zakaria Paliashvili's opera *Abessalom and Eteri* was staged in the same year. The beauty of the world musical treasury is considered to be the pride of the Georgian people. Composer Zakaria Paliashvili was an eminent Georgian artist. Alongside great creative work he did fruitful pedagogic, performer's, and public work. He was head of the Tbilisi Conservatoire from 1919, etc.

Victor Dolidze, as the author of the first national comic opera *Keto and Kote*, has become an indivisible part of the Georgian history of music. This opera began its life on the stage in 1919. It is also noteworthy that the audience saw the first Georgian ballet in 1919 too. It was *Bacchus' Holiday* by a woman composer Tamar Vakhvakhishvili.

It was in the same period of time that Giorgi Gurjiev founded The Institute of Man's Development". G. Gurjiev delivered interesting lectures, staged musical-choreographic performances, etc.

Organization of Soviet Power in Georgia

The Bolshevik era of Georgian history was ushered in on February 25, 1921. The political system in the country, conquered by Russia and deprived of its independence, was radically changed. Instead of a sovereign, democratic, parliamentary republic, Georgia was declared a Soviet Socialist Republic. No soviets, as governmental bodies, existed in Georgia in those days, and socialism was also seen as a remote perspective, but the new regime, like Russia, was called "a soviet socialist state". The main thing in this entire abracadabra was that Georgia did not have its own national statehood any longer and only its formal features remained.

Although Georgia nominally and legally retained the status of an independent country, in reality it turned into a part of the Russian empire, a region dependent on Moscow and deprived of its rights.

Having overthrown the regime of the independent republic of Georgia, Russia established a military-occupational regime there. The name of an occupant and conqueror would harm the reputation of Russia, seeking economic connections with Western countries, therefore the leaders of the Kremlin tried to conceal this fact by giving the function of the highest organ of the occupational government to Georgia's revolutionary committee.

In spite of the wide competence (imposing the supreme legislative, executive and controlling functions on it), the power and authority of the Georgian revolutionary committee was nominal. The real power in Georgia was in the hands of the Caucasian Bureau of Russia's Communist (Bolshevik) Party and the Revolutionary-Military Council of the 11th Red Army. The latter were subordinated to Moscow's respective departments. A higher position was occupied by the Central Committee of Georgia's Communist Party (B), also governed by the Kremlin through the Caucasian Bureau.

Bodies of local government were set up throughout Georgia: various revolutionary committees with regional, district, town, community power. They were not elected. Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Sukhumi, and all district revolutionary committees were established by the order of Georgia's People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. Community revolutionary committees were set up by their immediate seniors – district revolutionary committees. The aim of this whole system of revolutionary committees as a transitional form of government was to destroy old state structures, to suppress local forces opposing the regime, and to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Active steps were taken in all these directions in the spring of 1921. After the army and the guards of the Democratic Republic of Georgia were disbanded on February 26, the decrees of the Revolutionary Committee about the dismissal of Georgia's Constituent Assembly, the abolition of the legal system, local bodies of self-government, etc. were published. As for the achievements reached by the government of the Democratic Republic in the sphere of building the state during the three years of their rule, they were destroyed, though the Revolutionary Committee did not find it easy to build a new system.

The social basis of the Soviet power in Georgia was very poor. It did not have any serious support in any layer of society. The entire political elite considered the Bolsheviks to be an opposing and hostile force; they also distrusted the nobility, intelligentsia and others. One part of the Bolshevik leaders was distinguished by a fanatical devotion to the idea of socialism, but they did not have sufficient competence to govern the country.



Ivane Javakhishvili



Petre Melikishvili



The first building of Tbilisi University

Leaders of Georgia's Bolshevik organization



Mikha Tskhakaya



Shalva Eliava



Sergo Orjonikidze



Mamia Orakhelashvili



Philipe Makharadaze



Aleksandre Gegechkori



Herewith, many time-servers and hangers-on appeared at any level of governmental bodies, among them there were even ignoramuses with a shady past, robbers, and terrorists. It is also noteworthy that S. Orjonikidze himself admitted that there were many "dishonest people, swindlers and thieves" among the "comrades" sent to Georgia from the center (Moscow) to inspect various governmental departments in Georgia.

A decree of Georgia's Revolutionary Committee, concerning the organization of the state power, was published on April 21, 1921. The decree categorically rejected the democratic principle of dividing the government and placed both the legislative and executive power in the hands of the Revolutionary Committee. The Revolutionary Committee undertook the function of a supreme controlling establishment as well. People's commissariats were set up to head various branches of the government. Instead of the seven ministries existing in Georgia, twelve commissariats were formed, viz. commissariats of foreign affairs, military-naval affairs, justice, finances, people's education, labor, agriculture, food products, social welfare, communication, foreign trade, health care. Workers and peasants' inspection (*Mushglekhini*) was established with the purpose of controlling the activities of the governmental bodies.

The formation of special military detachments (*Choni*) served to consolidate the new government. These military detachments were established at the local party organizations and mainly consisted of Bolshevik workers and Young Communist League members.

In February 1921, a "Militia of workers and peasants," called "the armed force of the revolution," was established.

A radical reformation of the legal system was found necessary. A provisional council (soviet) substituted the law-courts of the senate, districts, and arbitrators. The institution of jurors was abolished, etc.

A procurator's office was established at the Commissariat of Internal Affairs and a new code of law was issued in 1922. Old judges were dismissed. New, absolutely inexperienced, but loyal to the Government, communists were appointed to the legal bodies and the procurator's office.

The Bolshevik government declared that they did not intend to take a revenge on their political opponents. It was mentioned in the official appeal of the Revolutionary Committee of March 8, 1921 that they granted amnesty to the parties and groups that would recognize the revolution and the Soviet system in Georgia. Their hypocrisy was obvious, the more so as it had been preceded by the decree of the very same Revolutionary Committee about establishing a special organ – Georgia's Special Committee (Sakcheka-GSC) to fight against counter-revolutionary organizations, sabotage, and to maintain order. The special "Committee, this beauty and pride of the Revolution" (N. Bukharin) was an investigating agency, a prosecutor, and an executor as well. Two special departments were established in "Sakcheka" apart from other departments. Their duty was to suppress the opposition of anti-Soviet parties and the clergy. Very soon, the activities of all political organizations, except those of the Bolsheviks, were prohibited.

At the end of 1921 and the beginning of 1922 elections to the soviets of the workers, peasants and Red Army men's deputies were held. These Bolshevik elections to soviets were far from allowing the citizens to express their free will. A certain part of the population was deprived of the right to vote. These were as follows: the clergy, traders engaged in private business, those who lived at the expense of hired labor, the former officials of the former government, police and special departments, etc. The elections were conducted





at various dates in different parts of Georgia. Besides, they were conducted separately at the meetings of the workers and employees of different factories, plants and establishments. Voting was carried out by a show of hands. The main thing about these elections was that as a matter of fact, only one political subject – the Communist Party – participated in these elections.

Georgia's political parties (apart from the left-wing Federalists) boycotted the elections from the very start. They did not conceal their intension of wrecking that farce. The government managed to carry out the elections at the cost of great efforts, having used all administrative resources and great propaganda. It is obvious that the absolute majority of deputies were members of the Communist party. The Revolutionary Committee convened the first congress of Georgia's Soviets on February 25, 1922, the anniversary of Georgia's occupation.

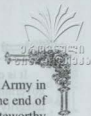
Among 380 participants of the congress, 272 were members of the communist Party. The essential resolution, adopted at the congress, was the ratification of the constitution. This document repeated the main principles of Russia's principal law, which also presented the foundation of the constitutions of all other Soviet republics that had been established in those days. The only thing that distinguished Georgia's constitution from those of other republics was that it declared the Georgian language to be the state language. It is noteworthy that this item was entered in the constitution at the proposal of the well-known scholar-Simon Khundadze, a representative of the left wing Socialist-Federalists.

The Congress elected a 95-member All Georgia's Central Executive Committee (Tsak-CEC) - the supreme executive, directing and controlling organ. In the middle period of the congresses of soviets Philipe Makharadze, one of the leaders of the Georgian Bolsheviks, was elected chairman of the CEC. Georgia's government-the Soviet of the People's Commissars was formed at the first sitting of the CEC.

The first Congress of the Soviets laid the foundation for the unified soviet system of proletariat's dictatorship. It is known that Lenin addressed the Georgian Communists, advising them not to copy the Russian tactics blindly, to use "the spirit, essence and lessons of Russia's experience, and not to repeat it word for word," to be particularly tolerant towards the national intelligentsia, etc. However, this instruction to match this political system with Georgian reality was nothing but meaningless words. The model of the Soviet power that had been approved in Russia's 1917-1921 reality was introduced in Georgia without any changes.

The main support of the unjust rule of the proletariat's dictatorship, i.e. of the Bolshevik Party in Georgia was the Red Army, the same as in Russia and other sovietized republics. This army was the army of Soviet Russia, the army of a conqueror and oppressor. It is true that Georgian soldiers also fought in its ranks, but the army practically consisted of Russians. "We are not concealing the fact that we have brought the Red Army here, we say it with pride. ... we led them. If we tell them, they will leave Georgia immediately", the chairman of the Revolutionary Committee, Philipe Makharadze, said at the meeting of Tbilisi workers.

The Georgian Bolsheviks really led the Red Army against Georgia, but the entrance of this army into Georgia, or their leaving it, did not depend on the Georgian Bolsheviks' wish. The Red Army was not subordinated to Georgia's Revolutionary Committee, it was subjected to the will of the Kremlin, and nobody would ask Philipe Makharadze whether



to withdraw it or leave it there. "Take the most vigorous steps to leave the Red Army in Georgia", the Caucasian bureau of RCP (B) received an order from Lenin at the end of March 1921, and the Caucasian bureau carried it out without protest. It is also noteworthy that, requested by Moscow, Georgia's first congress of Soviets asked the authorities of the RSFSR to leave the 11th Army in Georgia.

Against this background, it is necessary to explain V. Lenin's proposal to the Chairman of the Caucasian Bureau of RCP (B) to form Georgia's Red Army from workers and the poorest peasants and to arm them immediately. This intention of Lenin was considered to be the expression of his special care for Georgia for a long time. Now let us see whether it was so or not.

The formation of the Georgian Red Army was not from any military need. This was not necessary to defend soviet power in Georgia either. This function was very well fulfilled by the detachments of the Bolshevik army. The formation of Georgian military units served the purpose of deceiving the Western society. This was the meaning of the following phrase of Lenin in the letter to S. Orjonikidze: "It is absolutely necessary from the political point of view". The Kremlin thought that the formation of Georgian workers and peasants' army and their incorporation into the Red Army would mask the real essence of Russia's occupant soviet army.

The regiments of infantry and mounted army were established in Georgia as early as in April of 1921. In the summer of 1922 the first Georgian infantry (rifle) regiment was formed. And in 1924 another (the 2nd) also an infantry (territorial) regiment was formed. The Georgian red regiments were not independent military units. Unlike the tsarist army, they were not allowed to wear a national uniform or even any distinguishing national symbol. The Georgian military units were joined to the 11th Red Army from the very start. The latter was turned into a separate Caucasian Army after the Caucasian front had been liquidated.

Establishing Autonomies in Georgia and Alienation of Its Territories

Georgia, sovietized by Russia by force, was deprived of independent statehood from February 1921 on. The country, turned into a Soviet Socialist Republic, found itself in the orbit of Russia, this time in the orbit of the Soviet Empire. The organs, considered the supreme organs of Communist or Soviet structures, did not have the right to decide even trifling questions without Moscow's permission. Moscow decided Georgia's fate. Any concrete plan concerning Georgia was concocted in Moscow. It was also there that it obtained authority and was sent to Tbilisi to be put into action. The directives, received from Moscow, could be only translated into Georgian; no changes could be introduced into them. In this way, a factual annexation of Georgia was taking place without consulting its population and doing harm to its interests. It was also in Moscow that a project with a far-reaching aim of alienating Georgian territories and establishing autonomies there was compiled. This project laid the foundation for the formation of republics inside the republic.



It is obvious that the Georgian Bolshevik leaders who occupied high positions in the government of those days had their share in this action, directed against the territorial integrity of Georgia, and other political actions against it. These were S. Orjonikidze (Caucasian Bureau of R.C.P.(B)), P. Makharadze, M. Orakhelashvili, M. Tskhakaia, Sh. Eliava, A. Gegeckori, M. Kakhiani, B. Mdivani, L. Gogoberidze, S. Kavtaradze, V. Sturua and others (Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party (B), Georgia's Revolutionary Committee, the Soviet of People's Commissars, Central Executive Committee). It was their formal consent or signature on the respective document that a separate decision took its final form, and it was with their participation that these decisions were carried out in real life. Thus, great is the share of the Georgian leader-Bolsheviks in the anti-Georgian actions of Soviet Russia and their responsibility for them.

One of the most important objectives that Soviet power set for itself was to settle the national question to strengthen the new political regime. The Communist model of achieving the national harmony was based on Lenin's theory of internationalism and the self-determination of nations. The noteworthy practical expression of this model was establishing autonomous units.

Soviet Socialist Republic of Abkhazia

An indivisible part of Georgia – Abkhazia — had had the status of autonomy in the Democratic Republic of Georgia, but the internal and external hostile forces were not satisfied with it. For instance, Abkhaz Bolsheviks tried to cede Abkhazia from Georgia and incorporate it into Soviet Russia. Russia not only sympathized with such an activity on their part, but also encouraged and assisted them in it, though it could do nothing about it. After Russia had established the Soviet regime in Georgia, Moscow could make Abkhazia part of Russia, but it avoided aggravating the situation at the international level, besides there was no practical necessity for it. Bolshevik Russia already considered Georgia its property and there was no need of annexing its provinces separately.

Soviet propaganda declared that ethnical minorities, among them the Abkhazians, had been oppressed in the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

After they had seized power, the Communists were to create the illusion that their government had decided the Abkhazian question better than the Mensheviks. It was this and the endeavor to satisfy the ambition of the Abkhazian Bolsheviks that led to the fact that on March 31, 1921 Abkhazia was declared an independent Soviet Socialist Republic.

This question conceived and planned in Moscow and agreed upon with the Caucasian Bureau, was "approved" by the Central Committee of Georgia's Communist Party (B), and on May 21 of the same year it was "ratified" by Georgia's Revolutionary Committee. The Participation of the Abkhazian Revolutionary Committee (N. Lakoba, V. Eshba, N. Akirtava, etc.) in this process was still more formal than that of the leading bodies of Georgia.

Abkhazia's independence was a source of fiction from the very beginning. Local statesmen – N. Lakoba, V. Eshba and others understood it themselves. They considered Abkhazia's sovereignty to be a "temporary", "transient" event, called it "nonsense", an "empty signboard", etc.



In reality, Abkhazia had never been a real or independent state. It was not recognized to be a subject of the international law by anyone. It is known that Soviet Russia acknowledged Abkhazia to be the indivisible part of Georgia by the agreement concluded with the Democratic Republic of Georgia on May 7, 1920. A year later in "The Allied Worker and Peasants' Agreement" concluded on May 21, 1921 signed by RSFSR and the Georgian SSR, no change was entered concerning this question. Abkhazia was wholly dependent on Georgia, which in turn was dependent on Soviet Russia.

Taking all of this into consideration, the Caucasian Bureau of RCP(B) on July 5, 1921 adopted a resolution to start working on a plan to return an autonomous Abkhazia to Georgia. Part of the Abkhazian Bolsheviks that did not believe in the real independence of Abkhazia proposed to unite Georgia and Abkhazia on a federative principle.

The so-called "Special Union Agreement" clarified the legal relationship of Georgia and Abkhazia. It was concluded between the Soviet Socialist Republics of Georgia and Abkhazia on December 16, 1921. This alliance was concluded with the approval of the Soviet hierarchy (the permission of the Kremlin, the resolution of the Caucasian Bureau, the approval of Georgia and Abkhazia's Communist and Soviet structures). It gave Abkhazia the name of a treaty republic. This was the way the Abkhazian status was reflected in the records of the 1st congress of Abkhazia's soviets, in Georgia's 1922 and 1927 constitutions, and other documents. It is noteworthy that Abkhazia was incorporated into the Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Federative Republic through Georgia, Abkhazia's budget was part of Georgia's budget, etc. It is true that Abkhazia's state emblem and its flag were confirmed in Sukhumi and the Constitution was adopted in 1925 in which it is written that Abkhazia is a sovereign state, but in the Soviet reality, Abkhazia's sovereignty could not have and did not have a real meaning.

Up to 1931 Abkhazia was connected with Georgia with the above-mentioned agreement; in reality, it had the rights of an autonomous republic. In February 1931, Abkhazia became an autonomous soviet socialist republic within the borders of Georgia.

Ajarian autonomy

While discussing the question of granting the Moslem Georgia first a large-scale self-government and autonomy, the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia considered the harsh reality. At that time, a great part of the South and South Western Georgia was still under the control of the Ottomans. There were many obstacles on the way of spreading the jurisdiction of the newly created Georgian state over the above-mentioned region. One of the circumstances was that the Sultan promised the indigenous population of this land, ethnical Georgians that had embraced Islam, a political autonomy within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. Representatives of the local Georgian aristocracy who aspired to restore their ties with the historic motherland, but did not want to give up their privileges, suggested incorporating their region into Georgia with a special status, thus thwarting the proposal of the Ottoman Turkey.

Taking into consideration the religious alienation of the population of this oldest part of Georgia, which had been separated from Georgia for a long time and the peculiarities of its economic and cultural development, the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Georgia



thought it reasonable to grant the Batumi District an autonomous government. On February 21, 1921, the Constitution of the Democratic Republic confirmed that Moslem Georgia embracing Ajara and Klarjeti was granted "the autonomous government of local affairs". The Constitution did not define the plenary powers of the autonomy (a special law was to be adopted for it), but the wording "autonomous government of local affairs" did not mean the appearance of a new state formation inside the state. The autonomous governing of Moslem Georgia and not political autonomy was to make it easy for this part of the country to return to Georgia painlessly.

The natural adaptation of the Moslem Georgians to the rest of Georgia would not take long in the case of free development, and there would be no more foundation for the existence of autonomy. This was the way the political elite of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, both ruling and opposition parties, and the progressive society understood this question.

The Bolsheviks at the head of the Russian State had a different opinion concerning this question. On March 16, 1921, Soviet Russia concluded an agreement of friendship with the Angora government of Turkey. According to this agreement, without consulting Georgia, the Kremlin gave a significant part of Georgia — the Artaani and Artvini districts — to their friend Kemal Ataturk. As for Ajara, it was to remain with Georgia by this Russo-Turkish agreement under the condition that it should be given administrative autonomy. This item of the Moscow agreement was transferred unchanged to the Kars agreement which was concluded with the Turkish government by the already sovietized republics of the Southern Caucasus — Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia — in October 1921.

The Soviet history presented this fact as if giving autonomy to Ajara was determined by an external political factor alongside the religious one. That this political factor was connected with it received no attention. It is known that Turkey had not presented any particular claims to Noe Zhordania's government about the administrative-territorial arrangement of the country at the time of recognizing and acknowledging Georgia in 1921. So why should it have forced Georgia's new government to do it several months later?

Ajarian autonomy was more in the sphere of Soviet Russia's interests and not those of Turkey. Creating autonomous units in Georgia, alienating and breaking up its territories and so on was done with the purpose of weakening the national fortitude of the Georgian people, weakening their resistance against the Soviet regime, and was part of the plan worked out in the Kremlin.

The Ajarian Soviet autonomy assumed a radically different character from that of the autonomy of the Moslem Georgia. It must be noted that the Bolsheviks said that one of the reasons of the necessity of creating Ajarian autonomy was a national principle. Like the officials of Tsarist Russia, Soviet Communist leaders did not think Ajarians were Georgians. By giving them autonomy, they imagined that they had found a correct solution to the national question. In reality, the aim of creating this political unit was a treacherous intention of alienating Ajara from Georgia.

Soviet power in Ajara was declared on March 18, 1921. A local revolutionary committee was established, but they did not abolish the mejlis elected at the time of the Democratic Republic of Georgia at once. It had a political reason. Memed Abashidze was at the head



of the mejlis. Two months later the Bolsheviks managed to substitute the old members of the mejlis by new members – supporters of the Soviet regime and loyally disposed to it and elected a red mejlis.

The Ajara Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was established by the July 16, 1921 decree of Georgia's Revolutionary Committee. Mejlis had remained the highest body of the autonomy government, until the 1st congress of Ajara's soviets was convened. It (the Mejlis) had had the rights of the Revolutionary Committee. Soviet structures were formed in Ajara at the beginning of 1922.

In spite of the fact that a political autonomy was established in Ajara very often the social-political situation became strained and disturbances took place among the population. This was caused by neglecting the uniqueness of that part of the country and various experiments of economic or social character.

South Ossetian Autonomous District

In February and March of 1921, armed detachments of Ossets who had emigrated to the Northern Caucasus returned to Georgia with the Red army units and took an active part in overthrowing the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. The Ossetian Bolsheviks demanded that a Soviet Socialist Republic of Ossetia be established in Georgia as a payment for their being Georgia's enemies, arranging uprisings against its independence and their active participation in the fight for Soviet power. The Kremlin agreed to give them autonomy, but as for selecting the form of the self-determination for the Ossets living in Georgia, it entrusted the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of RCP(B) with this task.

The leaders of the Caucasian Bureau decided that it would be too much to establish a third republic in Georgia alongside Abkhazia and Ajara, and resolved to give it the form of South Ossetian Autonomous District. The question of its borders and the administrative center was to be decided by Georgia's nominal authorities – the Central Executive Committee and the Soviet of People's Commissars.

It was not an easy question. The area where the Ossets lived was not large, embracing about a score of villages. It became necessary to specially increase the territory and the number of the population and to incorporate several Georgian villages and the town of Tskhinvali into the autonomy.

The Georgian population of the region protested against being incorporated into the autonomous district. The same idea was expressed by part of the local Ossets who said they had nothing against Georgians and did not demand being separated from them. However, another part of Ossets, especially those who had emigrated to North Ossetia after the 1920 rebellion and now came back, were filled with the feeling of taking a revenge. Many of them behaved badly, oppressed Georgian families, and were eager to take possession of their property and houses.

The progressive part of Georgian society was also against the idea of the South Ossetian autonomy, as were many representatives of Georgian leading Communists. For example, the People's Commissar of Internal affairs B. Kvirkvelia wrote the following in his report: Having studied the question in detail, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs finds



it impossible to establish South Ossetia as a separate administrative unit, for South Ossetia, as a whole geographic unit, does not exist. The districts, inhabited by Ossets, belong to different provinces geographically and economically; these districts, divided from each other by impassable mountains are not connected with one another, etc.

In spite of this aggravated situation, a decree of Georgia's Central Executive Committee and the Soviet of the People's Commissars was published on April 10, 1922 establishing the South Ossetian Autonomous District. Alongside Ossetian settlements, 40 Georgian villages and the town of Tskhinvali were included in it. The legalization of the autonomous formation for the Ossets living in Georgia was an illegal decision, harmful to the interests of the Georgian state. This decree violated Georgia's territorial integrity, once more violated the national rights of the Georgian people, and caused universal discontent.

It must be noted that the Soviet government gave autonomy to the Ossets living in Georgia at the time when the Ossets living in their own country — North Ossetia — were deprived of this right. After the North Ossetian autonomy was established in RSFSR in 1924 an idea was born among its authorities of uniting the South and North Ossetias. The 5th Congress of the Deputies of South Ossetian Soviets approved of this idea and thought that it would be better to subordinate the united Ossetia to Georgia. This problem was being discussed in the governmental bodies of Georgia and the Southern Caucasus in the summer of 1925, but Moscow interfered and this question was removed from the agenda.

The disintegrating of the Georgian lands did not end only by establishing autonomous units on Georgia's territory. An important part of Georgia's primordial lands was alienated from Georgia illegally in the first years of the Soviet regime.

The leaders of the Kremlin, dreaming of an international socialist revolution and the world proletarian state, considered the inner frontiers of the Soviet republics to be a minor question. They demanded that it be decided painlessly, based on "the proletarian internationalism." This new Bolshevik approach to the question of frontiers damaged the sovietized Georgia most of all. Georgia was made to give Azerbaijan the Zakatala District (Sainguilo) and the pastures of Eldar and the Gareji Valley, to give the Southern part of the Borchalo Region with its copper deposits to Armenia, to agree to yielding Shavshet-Erusheti-Artaan-Potskhovi to Turkey, etc. In this way Georgia lost over 19 thousand square kilometers of territory and almost 270 thousand inhabitants.



Georgia's Incorporation into the Transcaucasian Federative Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

A year after the sovietization, Georgia's statehood, having become a mere formality, received another blow. Georgia was again harnessed to the Russian Empire, which the Kremlin was rebuilding on the ruins of the destroyed "prison of nations".

Russia began creating a future empire by concluding the so called union agreement with the sovietized republics. After the Ukraine and Byelorussia, Soviet Russia drew up such a "Worker-Peasant Union Agreement" with Soviet Georgia as well in May 1921. The agreement recognized Georgia's independence formally (Preamble, Article 2), but this declared sovereignty was annihilated by the subordination of Georgia's most important economical organs and military commandment to the RSFSR structures. Georgia only had the right to send her representative to the united center of military and economic departments (the Congress of All Russia's Soviets, the Central Executive Committee).

Soon Russia was not satisfied with such a situation and appealed to sovietized Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia to unite their economies. The creation of a united economic center was to facilitate the political incorporation of these republics. The local Bolsheviks were already discussing the form of such an alliance.

The southern Caucasus was considered to be a whole economic region within the borders of Russia since the nineteenth century. Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan had even lived as one state (the Independent State of Southern Caucasus, April and May of 1918), but this fact did not make this perspective more fascinating; to be more precise, it had a contrary effect. Herewith, the integration that had already begun had a different aim now, and if it had not been obvious to many people before, it became quite clear to everybody soon.

In time Tsarist Russia tried to erase the notion denoting the national statehood — Georgia — from the Georgian people's memory. With this purpose the regime established the names of Tbilisi and Kutaisi gubernias (provinces). Bolshevik Russia continued the same course; the Kremlin created a new politically conquered Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan to make the peoples of these countries forget their identity.

The Georgian anti-Soviet political parties were against Georgia's incorporation into the Transcaucasian Federation. This question strained the situation in the high echelons of the Georgian Communist Party as well. Part of the Central Committee — B. Mdivani, P. Makharadze, S. Kavtaradze, M. Okujava, K. Tsintsadze — protested against the forms and methods of organizing the Transcaucasian Federation that the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee used. They thought it necessary to pave the way for this union, to carry out explanatory work among the masses, etc. The leaders of the Caucasian Bureau accused this group of Communists of deviating from the Bolshevik national policy in favor of nationalism and called them "National-uklonists" (deviationists).

In spite of the resistance of the "National-uklonists" the Central Committee of Georgia's Communist Party considered the resolution of November 3, 1921 of the plenum of the Caucasian Bureau about forming the Federative Union of Transcaucasian republics to be realized by all means. On November 28, a resolution of the Politbureau of the Central





Committee of RCP (B) written by V. Lenin on the same question was published. According to the resolution, the popularization of the idea of federation began, agitation-propaganda spread wide, rallies, supporting the members of trade-union and Komsomol organizations were arranged.

The Federative Union of Transcaucasian Soviet Republics demanded the coordination of railways and foreign trade, the abolition of custom-houses, the unification of the monetary system, the establishment of the Caucasian economic Bureau, etc.

The creation of the Transcaucasian Federation did not cause any complication in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Beginning with 1922 the process was sped up. The idea of the Federation was approved of by the congresses of the Communist parties and soviets, also at the congress of Communist organizations of Transcaucasia and other forums. On March 12, 1922, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan signed an agreement about establishing a federative union of the Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Republics. Governmental bodies were formed. The supreme power in the Federative Union belonged to a conference of plenipotentiary representatives, elected on a par. As for the executive power, it was in the hands of the Union Soviet appointed by the conference.

The integration of the Southern Caucasian countries into one political unit did not end here. It was considered necessary to turn this confederation-like union into one republic of the soviet type. The first of Transcaucasian Soviets, convened on December 10, 1922, approved this idea and established a Soviet Socialist Federative Republic of Transcaucasia. The Congress elected the Central Executive Committee of the newly formed republic, consisting of 150 members and 50 candidates, adopted the constitution of the Soviet Socialist Federative Republic of Transcaucasia and elected delegates to the 1st Union Congress of the Soviets. The elected legislative and executive bodies were nominal organs of the supreme power of the Region. The factual power in the Region was still in the hands of the Caucasian Bureau. It was transformed into the regional Committee of RCP (B) of Transcaucasia at the end of 1922.

In comparison with the Federative Union the establishing of a united Soviet Republic violated the national interests of the peoples united in it and violated the sovereign rights of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. It is noteworthy that these republics were not called union republics. They were "the republics that had concluded an agreement" and they did not have the right to leave the federation unilaterally.

Alongside the economic and political integration of the Southern Caucasus, the process of merging the other Soviet republics into RSFSR was going on. Its aim was to restore the empire.

The ideologists of the Soviet imperial model had thought much about it. Two different projects were finally worked out in Moscow to achieve this aim. The first whose author was J. Stalin is known as the "project of autonomization" in history. According to this project, Russia's former colonies, called Soviet Republics, were to become part of RSFSR with the right of autonomy. The other — V. Lenin's project — was a more disguised plan of restoring the empire. It envisaged uniting the Soviet republics in a new federation "brotherly union of republics, having equal rights" instead of turning them into autonomies. If the first project frightened the non-Russian republics whose leaders played "independence", as Stalin said, they would easily agree to the other one, for there was no other choice. Besides the latter looked attractive externally, before the real essence of the new union was understood.

Nodar Asatiani, Otar Janelidze.



The leaders of the Communist parties of the Soviet Azerbaijan and Armenia supported the project of autonomization. After some hesitation, the project was approved in Belorussia's Central Committee of the Communist Party. As for the Ukraine, her Communist leaders were more on the side of the independence principle.

The project of integrating into Russia in the form of autonomy was most strongly opposed in Georgia. The Central Committee of the "National-Uklonists" did not approve of the idea of autonomization, considering it to be "premature", though they did not reject the necessity of integration with retaining "all the attributes of independence". The "National-Uklonists" proposed Georgia's entering the Union of republics directly, not via the Transcaucasian Federation. V. Lenin pretended to sympathize with the Georgian "National-Uklonists", but the Commission sent specially to Tbilisi (F. Dzerzhinski, D. Manuilski and others) supported the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of RCP(B) and its head S. Orjonikidze.

To avoid fresh complications, the Kremlin changed the model of autonomization and gave the priority to Lenin's project.

The Central Committee of RCP(B) adopted a resolution at the plenum of October 6, 1922 of uniting Soviet Socialist Republics into a Union State. Georgia's "National-Uklonist" Central Committee resigned collectively. The newly formed Central Committee obeyed the decision of the higher party authorities and began to carry it out.

The resolutions of establishing a united union state were adopted by the congresses of the Soviets of the Ukraine, Belorussia and the Transcaucasian Federation. On December 30, 1922 the first united congress of Soviets was convened in Moscow whose delegates adopted a "declaration" and agreement of establishing a new Soviet State. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was established based on uniting the Soviet republics of the Ukraine, Belorussia and Transcaucasia (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia). In 1924 the 2nd Union Congress ratified the Constitution of the USSR.

The republics, members of the USSR, had the right to leave the Union according to the Constitution, but the republics of the southern Caucasus — among them Georgia — did not enjoy this right. They were not separate political entities of the newly established state; owing to this, this declared principle did not concern them.

The Soviet Union having been established, the Transcaucasian Federative Union turned out to be a superfluous political unit, a bureaucratic mechanism with reduced functions. However, it still existed until 1936. As soon as the Union of the Transcaucasian Soviet-Socialist Republics disintegrated, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan were given the status of the Union Republics, members of the USSR.

Renewal of National-Liberation Movement

Social-political situation in Georgia in 1921-1923

The greatest majority of the population considered the establishment of the Soviet power in Georgia to be the annexation of Georgia by a foreign country-Bolshevik Russia. It is true that the whole population did not oppose the aggression of the Red Army in February and March of 1921, but the result of the occupation — the loss of the state



independence of Georgia — was such a shock that almost all the strata of the population were filled with the feeling of protest.

The new regime declared them to be the government of workers and peasants, but it was Russia's occupational army that was its real support in Georgia. The political sympathy of Georgia's working class was still with the Social-Democratic Party. Apart from it being a national tragedy, the fall of the Democratic Republic was a source of personal discontent for the workers. The discontent of the masses was conditioned by the fact that the force, expressing their interests, social-democracy, had lost power by an act of violence.

It was difficult for the peasantry to bear the encroachment upon their private property; they avoided paying new excessive taxes. The Soviet system turned the well-to-do population into their mortal enemies by taking away their property and restricting their rights.

The Georgian clergy and church found themselves proscribed. One thousand five hundred churches were pulled down or closed down in 1922-1923 alone. The state appropriated the lands and property of churches, and monasteries. They oppressed, arrested, and humiliated the servants of the church, abasing national traditions.

The intelligentsia was oppressed ideologically. They were requested to be loyal to the regime and to serve it obediently. This stratum of society immediately understood what evil future awaited their country and started to search for the forms of opposition.

The Cheka characterized the social-political situation created in Georgia as follows: the peasantry is ill-disposed towards the Soviet power, the intelligentsia and bourgeois circles are hostile towards the new government, as for the clergy, they are openly counter-revolutionary, the militia cannot be trusted, the representatives of political parties appeal to the population to oppose the government. And indeed, it was the political parties that undertook to unite the general discontent and to oppose the occupational regime.

The Georgian political sphere, artificially driven out of the social-political life, took an anti-Soviet position from the very start. The only exception was the Federalists' left-wing group who preferred to be loyal to the Soviet power. In 1923 they even joined the Communist Party.

The most numerous of the political forces opposing the Bolshevik occupational regime was the Social-Democratic Party. It had about 80,000 members in its ranks. The leading nucleus and a certain part of the members of the party had emigrated. Those who had stayed in their home country condemned Georgia's occupation, but they were not against taking part in political processes if the Soviet power restored Georgia's statehood and made the elections free.

Such was also the demand of the "Skhivi" (the Beam) — the independent Social-Democratic group that left the Social-Democratic Party as early as in January 1921.

The Social-Federalist Party adopted a resolution at its conference in which it rejected sabotage against the ruling power; herewith, it considered it necessary that "the elements of a sovereign state be restored."

The new reality urged Georgia's national-democracy to go over their tactics and recognize their party politically. The party activities of the members who had mainly worked in the spheres of culture, science and education up to that time were stopped. This intellectual part of the party were to retain their former jobs by pretending to be loyal to the Soviet regime, to take care of "the protection and the strengthening of the national



dignity" of the Georgian nation in legal conditions. The other part of the National Democrats went underground and began preparing for the fight against the conqueror.

The experience of the Soviet Russia made it obvious that a multi-party system and other democratic liberties were alien to the proletariat's dictatorship. It was clear that the Kremlin would not allow them in Georgia either, but they did not dare to forbid the political organizations in the conquered country at once, the political organizations that were supported by the population. At first the Bolsheviks took a course of undermining the political parties, opposing them from the inside. They tried to destroy their solidity and unity by blackmail, bribery and winning them over to their side. Having failed in reaching the desirable result, they turned to the so called method of self-liquidation that was nothing else but the oppression of anti-Soviet parties, their disbandment and destruction. In 1923 the "Self-liquidation of the Social-Democratic Party (Menshevik), the National-Democratic Party (the united democrats), "young Marxists" and other anti-Communist organizations was carried out under a strict control and guidance of the Bolshevik government. All these parties were officially declared to be disbanded, but in reality none of them stopped its activities. The prohibited parties became illegal and continued their activities secretly.

Georgian political emigration and the Western World

The Georgians who emigrated did their best to restore Georgia's independence. The day before they left Georgia on March 16, 1921, the overthrown government of the Democratic Republic were given a special mandate. The Constituent Assembly of Georgia set them the task of liberating their home country from the Bolshevik occupation.

It is true that the allied countries thwarted Georgia's hopes, as Noe Zhordania said "the bridge between us and Europe broke", still the government in-exile and the Georgian political emigrants overall never rejected their western orientation. European society sympathized with conquered Georgia; they condemned Soviet Russia's coercion over the small country and her people. This situation created an illusion that the western countries would also stand up for Georgia without any interest, would make the Kremlin give up their violence and annexation, and withdraw its armies from the borders of Georgia that they themselves had acknowledged to be an independent country.

The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia resumed its activities in 1921 when they arrived in France via Constantinople and settled down in Paris.

The government in-exile was unable to find a real ally in their fight for Georgia's independence. In spite of this fact they did not cease to try to make the leaders of England, France, Italy, or other countries wish to help Georgia. It was Akaki Chkhenkeli, the plenipotentiary ambassador, who was to carry out negotiations on behalf of Georgia with official circles. To revive the Georgian question abroad Georgia's diplomatic missions and representatives were to act. In 1921 Georgia's diplomatic activities were carried out by Akaki Chkhenkeli (in Paris), David Gambashidze (in London), Vladimir Akhmeteli (in Berlin), Giorgi Machabeli (in Rome), Khariton Shavishvili (in Geneva), Svimon Mdivani (in Angora). Zurab Avalishvili was sent to the USA with the mandate of the Georgian government several times. The Georgian political commission, headed by Noe Khomeriki,



was founded in Constantinople in 1922. Georgian boards of administration also worked in Prague and Warsaw.

Unfortunately the Georgian diplomatic corps, as an official structure of a sovereign state abroad, did not have all plenary powers. The Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, accredited according to all rules and acknowledged, functioned in France only up to 1933. In England, for instance, they considered the Georgian question to be so unimportant that they even closed first the Georgian department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and then the department of the Caucasus as well. An Eastern Department was established which was soon joined to the Russian Department. Georgia's Embassy, opened in London, did not exist for a long time in this reality, and while it existed its rights were reduced.

The main problem for the Western countries at that time was to eradicate the results of World War I. Herewith, the priority was given to reparations and putting in order relations among themselves and Soviet Russia. Owing to this, there was no place left for the Georgian question in international politics. A pleasant exception against this general indifference was the government of France (President Millierant, and the cabinets of Brian and Poincare) which tried to support Georgia's government in-exile.

The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia did their best, but their delegation was not admitted either to the Genoa or Lausanne international conferences. The reason for that was "Georgia being an Asiatic country" or the conferences were mainly of an economic character, and Georgia's question was a political problem, etc. The Georgian government in-exile had only one comfort – Soviet Russia was not allowed to speak on behalf of Georgia at these meetings.

Apart from international conferences, the League of Nations was also an important tribune for the Georgian political emigrants. A memorandum of Georgia's Democratic Republic was presented several times to the League's general assembly, asking that they raise their voice in defense of Georgia. Georgia's question would be given to discuss to various committees and it would reach the plenary meeting of the session. Only in September of 1922 a general resolution was adopted, instructing the board of the League to pay attention to the events going on in Georgia and to restore a normal situation.

One of the aims of the activities of the Georgian political emigrants was to consolidate the contacts and coordinate the activities with the persecuted governments of the Caucasian states. In 1918-1920 Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the mountain peoples of the Northern Caucasus were unable to manage to organize a united anti-Soviet front. Work with this purpose again revived abroad. A permanent organ of cooperation sprang up in June 1921. It was a council of union. A joint declaration was signed; a common goal of fighting against the Soviet power was set. A council of the Caucasian republics was established and a military committee was founded. An endeavor was made to establish contacts with the Cossacks and representatives of Kuban in emigration, but all in vain. As the parties were unable to agree on the question of rebellion and some other questions the unification of the Caucasian political forces became impossible. They did not manage to form an anti-Bolshevik front.

The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in exile paid special attention to propagandist and agitation activities, raise the interest of parties with socialist tendencies abroad to Georgia's problem. With this purpose Noe Zhordania, Karlo Chkheidze, Noe



Ramishvili and Evgeni Gegechkori addressed socialist and workers' organizations of European countries as early as in March 1921. They told them about the occupation of Georgia by Soviet Russia and asked help to stop the aggression.

Noe Zhordania delivered a special lecture before the representatives of socialist and workers' parties of France, Belgium, and England. Karlo Chkheidze and Noe Ramishvili paid special visits to Warsaw, Berlin; met the representatives of the ruling parties of Poland and Germany, the representatives of governmental circles of these countries. K. Chkheidze took part in the conference of the socialist international in Copenhagen and in the jubilee of the social-democracy of Holland. Evgeni Gegechkori and Svimon Mdivani had a talk with well-known socialist public men in Italy, etc. All these meetings were used for popularizing the Georgian question.

The conferences, congresses and meetings of the workers' and socialist parties of Europe passed resolutions supporting Georgia, condemned the occupation of a free democratic country, and demanded the withdrawal of the Bolshevik armies and the restoration of Georgia's independence. Many letters were published in the Western press full of sympathy for Georgia.

The Second International officially requested of Moscow that a joint Committee of socialists and communists be formed. Under the supervision of this committee a referendum and free elections would be conducted in Georgia. The Kremlin left this proposal unanswered. As for the Soviet government of Georgia, they rejected this request point-blank.

Of all the Georgian political forces that had emigrated, social democracy was distinguished by activity. It was the ruling force of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, it had more contacts abroad, and its financial possibilities were better. The leaders of the party and the government essentially presented one political team. The publications in the foreign press in the French, English and German languages, booklets in these languages in which important materials about the situation in Georgia in the conditions of the Soviet occupation are collected are noteworthy.

While the Social-Democratic Party had relations only with its kindred parties and the 2nd International, the National-Democrats in exile established contacts with the governmental and business circles of England, Italy and Turkey. They aspired to win them over to their side and gain their support in the fight for Georgia's liberation. In this respect the efforts of Giorgi Machabeli, Spiridon Kedia, Niko Nikoladze and David Vachnadze are significant.

Due to their shared anti-Soviet orientation, Georgian political parties overcame mutual distrust and managed to coordinate their work. In March of 1922 an inter-party (liberation) committee was formed in Paris. Its members were the representatives of the Social-Democratic Party, of Federalists and National-Democrats (K. Chkheidze, G. Veshapeli, S. Mdivani and others). The formation of the Inter-Party Committee hastened the uniting of the same parties in Georgia. It assisted rallying and uniting the forces fighting for independence.



The first protest actions. Insurrections in Svaneti and Pshav-Khevsureti

The new regime began subjugating the population by reprisals. From the day of the sovietization of Georgia until the end of December 1921, in only about 11 months' time, the special committee shot about 150 men. Unsubstantiated search, requisition, confiscation and arrests took a mass character. Such actions of the occupational government increased protests against the regime.

A peaceful wave of protest first appeared among the workers. The workers of factories and plants, railway depots and workshops expressed their distrust of the Bolsheviks at their meetings and adopted resolutions of protest. In October 1921 the workers' delegation presented their demands to Georgia's Revolutionary Committee. With the memorandum signed by five thousand men, the workers demanded the restoration of the state independence, the withdrawal of occupational armies from the country, setting political prisoners free, etc.

The government did not take notice of the workers' demands, arrested the people sent by them and put them to prison. The Tbilisi workers expressed their indignation by going on strike. Representatives of political parties, students and youth joined the ranks of protesting workers.

The situation in Georgia's mountainous regions was more strained. The anti-Soviet movement began in Svaneti and Khevsureti as early as in the spring of 1921. The revolutionary committee decided to disarm the mountain population and sent army detachments to help the local militia with this purpose. The fighters for independence blocked the way to the Red Army units. An insurrection flared up in Svaneti. The detachments of insurgents were led by N. Gardapkhadze, E. Gabliani, B. Pirveli, I. Paliani, etc.

In October 1921, the insurgents made the enemy retreat, taking part of the soldiers prisoner, disarmed the militia, and declared the local revolutionary committees abolished. The liberation movement grew gradually. The flag of victory was raised in Racha-Lechkhumi as well. The partisans enjoyed the support and sympathy of the population of Svaneti. They took an oath to fight for freedom faithfully and joined the insurgents. The survival of Soviet power in Svaneti became doubtful.

Georgia's Revolutionary Committee took decisive measures to improve the situation and sent new regiments of the Red Army to the mountains. The insurgents resisted the adversary for three days, but were defeated and compelled to retreat. The guerilla detachments moved to Upper Svaneti and fortified themselves there. The warfare assumed a stable character. The anti-Soviet political parties rendered moral support to the Svans and helped them financially as well.

A meeting of the population of Svaneti demanded that the government withdraw the troops and give them the right of free elections. In the spring of 1922, the insurrection flared up with fresh force. The guerilla detachments again occupied Lower Svaneti and attacked Tsageri. The insurrection lasted six months. The Soviet regime managed to suppress it only by a large-scale military operation.

The echoes of Svaneti's insurrection spread far beyond the borders of Georgia and attracted the attention of the international community. The exiled government of the

Nodar Asatiani, Otar Janelidze.



Democratic Republic of Georgia asked the conference, held in Genoa, to make Russia's government stop military actions on the territory of Georgia.

Georgia's Catholicos-Pathriach Ambrosi addressed the Genoa International Conference with a memorandum. He acquainted the educated humanity with the difficult situation created in Georgia, and demanded that: 1). Russia's occupational army be immediately withdrawn from Georgia, and 2). the Georgian nation be given a right to arrange their own social-political life independently.

Svaneti insurrection was a local rebellion. Other parts of Georgia did not support it properly, and this fact hastened its unsuccessful finale. In spite of its defeat, the insurrection was of great importance. Svaneti, fighting against the Soviet regime gave an example and encouraged the Georgian nation's growing liberation movement.

Georgia's Independence Committee (the same "Parity Committee") was founded in April, 1922 to guide the movement for Georgia's independence begun in Tbilisi. The Independence Committee was established on the basis of agreement among Georgia's Social-Democratic, the United National-Democratic, Socialist-Federalist, Socialist-Revolutionary and Independent Social-Democratic ("*Skhivi*") parties. Gogita Pagava was appointed its first chairman. Later on he was replaced by Nikoloz Kartsivadze, and finally by Konstantine Andronikashvili. "A United Military Center of the Fight for Georgia's Liberation" was founded at the Independence Committee. Military organizations of anti-Soviet parties were formed at the illegal central committees, etc. Georgia was filled with partisan detachments. The detachments acting in Kakheti and Khevsureti were distinguished by their heroic fighting. They were led by Kaikhosro (Kakutsa) Cholokashvili. The Members of these detachments had sworn to be faithful to each other, therefore they were called "sworn brothers".

The government called the partisan detachments "bands" from the very beginning and started to get ready for their liquidation.

In the spring of 1922 the situation became strained in Eastern Georgia as well. The disturbances embraced Kiziki, Telavi, and Tianeti districts. The Bolshevik government sent several expeditions to destroy the partisans of those places, but their efforts were futile.

The "sworn brothers" of Kakutsa Cholokashvili had the first significant fight with the Soviet troops near the town of Signaghi in June. A rebellion, whose epicenter was Dusheti, began in August 1922.

The plan of the insurrection was worked out by "the Military Center". According to the plan M. Lashkarashvili's detachment, acting in Kartli, was to attack the Red army units moving towards Dusheti from the rear. After that the insurgents, led by Kakutsa Cholokashvili, would rush into Tbilisi. At the same time fighting was to begin in the other parts of Georgia as well. The insurgents were in contact with Georgia's Catholicos Ambrosi.

The general population also supported the insurgents. After several successful battles the partisans blocked the roads leading to Pshav-Khevsureti and occupied strategic positions.

A military expedition was immediately sent from Tbilisi to the region of the insurrection. The expedition had at their disposal armored vehicles and several airplanes along with various detachments. The insurgents were not able to get assistance from Kartli. The disagreement among the parties caused disagreement among the partisan units as well.



Kakutsa Cholokashvili, left alone against the enemy, only managed to break through the siege and went to Kakheti. The Soviet Government took revenge on Khevsureti villages.

The parties fighting for independence and a great number of people noticed or suspected of having relations with partisans, became victims of harsh reprisals.

The defeat of the insurrection was followed by the exposure of the "Military Center". All the members of the Center were arrested in March 1923 and shot on May 19. These were as follows: Generals Aleksandre Andronikashvili, Konstantine Apkhazi, Varden Tsulukidze, Colonels Rostom Muskhelishvili, Gogi Khimshiashvili, Dimitri Chrdileli and others, 15 patriots in all. It was a heavy loss for the Georgian liberation movement, but the fighting forces did not fall into despair. The place of the destroyed center was taken by "a military committee", established on the initiative of Noe Khomeriki who had specially arrived from Paris.

The 1924 August insurrection

The Georgian political emigration incited the Georgian people to fight against the occupational regime. The government-in-exile and the leaders of political parties heartened the nation by their addresses and appeals. "Georgia's Liberation Committee", founded in Paris, sometimes even sent money to their home country to form and prepare military units.

The Svaneti-Pshav-Khevsureti spontaneous and local insurrections having been defeated, the parity committee planned a new insurrection throughout the whole Georgia, and prepared it in both military and political aspects. The political aspect meant to have a diplomatic and financial support of Western countries, Turkey's neutrality, and the support of the Caucasian peoples. As for military preparations, the whole Georgia was divided into districts where military commanders and their assistants were appointed. The military units consisted of five, ten and a hundred people. Arms and gunpowder were collected and partisans received field-training.

"The Independence Committee" got in touch with the Azerbaijani Musavatist Party, the leaders of Chechens and others with the purpose of gathering the national forces of the neighboring countries round the common cause. They planned ways of acting together, but the military union was not realized.

The government-in-exile of the Democratic Republic of Georgia hoped that Europe would help them. They expected financial help and arms, but there were no practical results. In February 1924, the government specially discussed the question of Georgia's being ready to start acting against the enemy. Some of the members said that the international situation was suitable for actions, while others held an opposite position. Finally, the following was decided: the international situation was not against beginning action. If the situation for people's actions was prepared in the whole of the Caucasus, actions were to take place.

Seeing the obvious indifference of the West and international community to Georgia and that this community only expressed a feeling of moral sympathy for it, many representatives of the political elite in exile (Irakli Tsereteli, Akaki Chkhenkeli, Spiridon Kedia, Ekvtime Takaishvili and others) thought it better to restrain from the rebellion.



Noe Zhordania was also for acting cautiously. According to a letter he sent to Georgia, the insurrection could only be justified in case the Caucasian mountain peoples and Azerbaijan were the first to start the protest actions.

In spite of all this, the parity committee and the military committee decided to start actions. They believed that their neighboring people would join the insurrection and Europe would also give them a helping hand. V. Jugeli and B. Chkhikvishvili, who had illegally returned from abroad, encouraged them with this factor.

February of 1924 was the first time that was chosen for the insurrection, but due to the arrest of the members of the military committee — G. Pagava and G. Tsinamdzgvrishvili — action was postponed. After this, the parity committee appointed August 17 to be the starting day. General Spiridon Chavchavadze was appointed commander-in-chief of the insurrection.

According to the plan, actions were to begin simultaneously in all the towns and districts. Tbilisi was to set the tone. It was Kakutsa Cholokashvili and G. Tsaguria's detachments that were to occupy Tbilisi. It was very important to occupy Batumi as it was a bridgehead, connecting Georgia with western countries.

Ten days before the appointed day of the insurrection the special committee arrested Valiko Jugeli, one of the distinguished leaders of the insurrection. "An Institute of a Political Espionage" worked in Cheka since 1921. Its agents were acting in both anti-Soviet parties and in the ranks of the political emigrants. They already had the necessary information about the preparation of the insurrection. Valiko Jugeli wrote a letter to the "Independence Committee" from prison, informing them that they had lost the cause and advised them to give up the idea of the insurrection.

The "Independence Committee" and the commander-in-chief only changed the date of the insurrection and decided to start the insurrection on August 29.

The Soviet government took decisive measures. They strengthened the defense of Tbilisi, captured the head of Batumi insurrection headquarters General I. Purtseladze, arrested General S. Karalashvili in Guria, etc. The parity committee, the commander-in-chief and his headquarters left Tbilisi, joined K. Cholokashvili, and settled down in his camp which was now the center of the insurrection.

The situation made the success of the insurrection doubtful for some political parties. The representative of the Federalist Party in the "Independence Committee" refused to take part in the insurrection, and the members of "Skhivi" showed hesitation, but in spite of this the insurrection started. It did not begin on the appointed date and everywhere. It began a day earlier and only in the town of Chiatura. This revealed the day of the insurrection prematurely. The first success also turned out to be ephemeral. The government suppressed the actions in Chiatura very quickly and declared a state of emergency throughout Georgia.

On August 29 the flames of insurrection spread almost throughout all the parts of Georgia. The actions were of mass character in Guria, Samegrelo, Svaneti, Imereti and a number of districts in Kakheti. In many places the population also joined the armed units. K. Cholokashvili's "sworn brothers" fought bravely, so did the detachments of B. Pirveli, E. Gabliani, M. Gvalia, R. Khoperia, E. Matitaishvili, D. Mkheidze, and thousands of patriots whose names remained unknown to history. Nobody helped the Georgians who gave their lives to their country. There was no help from anybody or anywhere. The



standard, raised in insurrection in Georgia, remained alone in the battlefield. The insurrection failed, resulting in numerous casualties. Many lives were lost to the noble idea of saving the motherland.

The Bolshevik government took a terrible revenge on Georgia and punished her with mass reprisals. According to the official data, 980 people (according to the unofficial information this number equals 4,000 people) were shot during the days of the insurrection. Among those that were shot were Noe Khomeriki, a member of the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, Benya Chkhikvishvili, the ex-Mayor of Tbilisi, Valiko Jugeli, the ex-commander of the National Guards, Konstantine Andronikashvili, chairman of the "Independence Committee", Generals S. Karalashvili, I. Purtseladze, N. Gardaphkadze and others. A number of patriots were pushed into goods vans in Chiatura and 95 men were machine-gunned. In the village of Ruisi, the 24-member Paniashvili family was fully exterminated. Many more happenings of this kind took place.

The government and the Soviet history as well looked in vain for the social grounds for the insurrection. The August of 1924 was fully conditioned by national motives. The insurrection was the Georgian nation's answer to the occupation of Georgia by a foreign force and its aim was to return the taken away liberty, to restore the lost statehood, and its renewal.

The 1924 insurrection for a long time was unjustly considered to be a "Menshevik counter-revolutionary adventure". In reality it was people's fight for national liberty and state independence. It made it clear to the world that freedom for the Georgian nation was not a simple matter, it was a life and death question, that Georgia would not put up with the Soviet dictatorship that had been imposed upon her.

In spite of the defeat, the national movement continued to exist and Georgians did not lose heart. The aspiration to independence did not die. Georgian political emigrants were still holding high the flag of fighting for freedom. As for the patriotic forces remaining in the country, they changed their tactics of fighting against the imperial regime with arms and chose a different course of retaining the national existence. It was a course of "moderate nationalism" – of peaceful labor and construction. It was a policy of paying attention to culture, art, and literature that did not have a reasonable alternative. In the situation when anti-Soviet political parties were liquidated this mission was undertaken by the national intelligentsia, the representatives of the Georgian literature, science, and art.

Georgia in the Years 1921-1941

Economic and social policy

The establishment of the Soviet power in Georgia brought about cardinal changes of economic and social relations. The model of socialism that the Bolsheviks were building in Russia after the October revolution implied the liquidation of private property and the creation of an economic system regulated by the state. This experiment was realized in Georgia since 1921 as well. The first step in this process was the nationalization of enterprises and establishments. Georgia's mining and processing industrial enterprises,



hydroelectric power stations, railway, and the merchant navy were nationalized. The polygraphic production, leather and tobacco factories, the factories of food production, and others became state property.

The land was also nationalized. It was now in the state fund and was declared the property of the people. The lands of churches and monasteries and big landowners were confiscated in the first place. Selling, buying, and leasing land was prohibited.

It was the state that became the owner of all the nationalized enterprises and their property. Since this time, a specially made up supreme soviet of the people's economy determined the form, the tempo of economic development, and the annual and long-term plans. It was also the state that registered and controlled the execution of these plans.

Such home policy caused a total crisis in Soviet Russia. The economy was going down; political and social relations became extremely strained. People's discontent, raging in the villages, spread in the towns as well. The situation was the same in armed forces too. The leaders of Bolshevism understood that only violence was not a way out of this most serious situation. It was necessary to give up some ideological dogmas and reach a compromise. The 10th congress of the RCP(B), held in March, 1921, took a course of NEP — New Economic Policy. The NEP allowed limited market relations. A "special food tax" was replaced by a food tax. It was allowed to lease small and unprofitable enterprises to private persons and co-operatives. A practice of concessions was restored. Personal initiative was given a wider scope, the exchange of goods between village and town was made easier, etc.

The NEP was neither alien nor new to Georgia. It was more a continuation of the old practice, only in a changed and somewhat specific situation. The new economic policy was a managed policy, adopted by the government with the purpose of retaining and strengthening their power, and not a natural process of the social-economic development. The liberalization of economics was not followed by the democratization of the political life. The Bolsheviks did not intend to loosen the "nuts" and make their dictatorship more liberal. The NEP faced great difficulties due to the discrepancy between liberalism and totalitarianism. In villages its development was difficult and contradictory.

The Soviet agrarian reform expressed in Georgia by the redistribution of lands turned out to be unsuccessful. Scarcity of land and artificially increased quantity of peasant households made it impossible to give the peasants plots of land according to the established norms (in Eastern Georgia approximately 4 desyatinas per household, and 2.5 desyatinas in Western Georgia). A great part of the poorest peasants did not get any land. They seized the lands of the nobility and well-to-do peasants, appropriated their cattle, agricultural implements, etc. This caused tension. The situation became particularly tense in Gori, Senaki, Zugdidi, Ozurgeti and other districts.

The heaviest burden for the rural population was the tax on food products that was to be paid with food products. Along with wheat, it was to be paid on ten other products (meat, wine, cheese, etc.). The population of Western Georgia refused to pay the tax levied on wheat, for they did not have enough bread to feed their own families. Beginning with the year 1922, it was permitted to pay half of this tax with money, and later on the whole of it could be paid with money. In this way, a somewhat reduced common agricultural tax was established.



In 1925 N. Bukharin's well-known appeal to the peasantry was published. It told them to become rich. Soon the Soviet government granted some privileges to this stratum of society. Peasants were allowed to lease their land, to use hired labor, etc. All this assisted the development of the peasant economy. Agricultural laborers became more interested in their work, the productivity of labor increased, and the financial conditions of peasants improved.

Important land-reclamation and irrigation projects were begun in Georgia in 1921-1925. Sixteen kilometer long irrigation canals were constructed. They increased the area of the irrigated land by 45,000 desyatinas. The first steps were made to drain the Colchis swamp. The area of agricultural crops, especially those of technical cultures was considerably enlarged. The latter was shaped by the growth of the demand for industrial raw materials.

There was a share of cooperative and soviet farms in the development of the people's economy. In 1926, 21% of Georgia's peasantry participated in the cooperative movement. The union of Kartl-Kakheti producers played the leading part in the cooperative movement, so did the vine-growing and wine-making association "Union" of the Borchalo District, etc. Large "people's estates", confiscated from former members of the royal family and private owners, were turned into soviet farms. The government brought agricultural machines and implements from Russia or European countries, arranged renting stations, etc., but due to lack of implements the peasants were compelled to do their work by hand. A wooden plough, a hoe, a scythe and sickle were still the main implements in villages. Herewith, the drive to produce consumer goods and not market products hindered modernizing the peasant economy in the capitalist manner.

In spite of this, the economic prosperity in 1925-1926 was obvious. The whole produce of Georgia's agriculture approached the pre-war, 1913 level.

The revival of the village became a stimulus for the reforms in the spheres of industry, trade, finances, etc.

The process of making industrial enterprises the state property continued after introducing the NEP as well. It is true that by 1923 out of over six thousand enterprises only 245 (4.1%) were nationalized, the number of workers employed in them (ten thousand men) equaled the number of workers, employed in the private sector. The large factories and plants that had become state property produced two-thirds of Georgia's whole industrial production.

The concentration of nationalized industrial enterprises went on in a fast tempo. Tobacco, wine, forestry, and about sixty other state trusts were established. It must be noted that the imperial government subordinated some enterprises and branches of industry to the all union industry. The majority of state enterprises did not have enough skilled workers, engineers and technical personnel. The fluctuation of manpower was high. All this reduced the labor-productivity and was the reason of the low quality of the output and its high price.

The private enterprises took the market into consideration; they also considered the demands of the consumer while the nationalized factories and plants, or the new ones built by the state, followed the planned economics and carried out the state orders. Industrial production was scarce and it was expensive. The inadequate exchange of products between town and village caused great difference of prices, the so-called problem of scissors, and various complications.



The government began restoring industry in Georgia by the reconstruction of old enterprises. At the same time the projecting and building of new enterprises went on. By 1925 Tbilisi machine-building and mechanical plants, the Batumi cast-iron foundry, and the Kutaisi broadcloth factory began to work. Foundations were laid for the Upper-Avchala and Abasha hydro electric power stations, etc.

The NEP first hastened the development of the branches of light industry that used local raw materials. The introduction of economic accounts made the work of industrial enterprises more active. It was also caused by the opportunity of introducing a rational system of production, self-financing, and restoring the self-government.

The state paid great attention to material and moral stimulation of workers and employees in the period of the New Economic Policy. The establishment of a tariff system, widespread mass propaganda, and other measures caused unusual enthusiasm and zeal in workers and employees.

It was very important for the development of industry to give certain enterprises to foreign companies as concessions. An agreement for giving a twenty-year concession to the Chiatura manganese deposit was signed in 1925. An American manufacturer A. Harriman, who later was a diplomat and political figure, obtained this right. He was to invest 12 million U.S. dollars to equip the mines and to reconstruct the railway and harbor in the Poti port. The Soviet party received three dollars for every exported ton in the first year, and four dollars from the next year.

The establishment of the new economic policy increased the share of the industrial production in Georgia's economy. At the end of 1925 it equaled 26.2% of the whole national income.

The financial situation in Georgia was bad. The deficit in the country's budget was made up by printing money. The people's bank of Georgia was founded in September 1921. It began giving commercial and state credits. State bonds and peasants loans were issued, etc. The monetary credit and taxation policy was directed towards driving the private capital out of the people's economy and developing and strengthening the socialist sector.

Organization of trade changed considerably. As soon as the Soviet Union was established, the Union government gained a monopoly on foreign trade. Therefore, the whole income of this branch became a property of the whole empire. The Soviet Union performed commercial operations with the West chiefly through Georgia. Goods brought from foreign countries were collected in Batumi and Tbilisi and sent to various places of the new empire from there. This caused the devaluation of the Georgian money because a great amount of Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani banknotes gathered there. Georgian money had been much more stable.

The country's economics was greatly damaged. The National-Uklonist government tried to retain Georgia's financial independence, but failed. In 1923, the issuance of the Transcaucasian money began, and in the following year, a Soviet currency-tchervonets was introduced. A monetary reform was carried out in the whole of the Soviet Union. Imperial taxes, similar for all the republics, were established, a common budget was formed for the whole empire, etc.

The Soviet government called itself the government of workers and peasants and directed the vector of its social policy towards these classes. The turning of economics





into a socialist system changed the form of the traditional division of society and established a new structure.

Having nationalized industry, the Soviet regime diminished the economic strength of bourgeoisie. As for its resistance as a political force, it turned it to nil by the "red terror". The nobility's backbone was also broken by mass reprisals and the confiscation of their property. Only the well-to-do peasantry remained a somewhat independent stratum, having some property. The latter were included into a category of kulaks and their persecution and oppression began as they were considered exploiters. The average peasantry was not looked upon with sympathy either. They were considered to be enemies of socialism and the source of the counter-revolution.

There were not many representatives of the bourgeoisie in Georgia. The government was greatly alarmed by "a high percentage index" of nobility and the existence of "feudal relations" in rural areas. The Soviet regime was anxious to divide the upper and lower layers of the rural population and to make the poor loyal to the new regime.

The small Georgian working class was the first that the new regime won over to its side. The ranks of this class grew fast alongside the development of industry, re-opening of factories and plants, and building new enterprises. By 1925, the number of workers was 116,000. Being freed from taxes and being given low-interest loans helped the government to win the sympathy of this part of population too.

The new economic policy brought innovations in social relations as well. A group of private employers – "the Soviet bourgeoisie", called *nepmen*, appeared. They were characterized by a number of specific features. Their social prestige was much higher than their legal competence. The status of this group, given to them by the legislation, was much lower than their social status. The *nepman* did not have the right to vote and any political rights either. This most active and capable part of the town population that was not very numerous either, exerted considerable influence on society.

One could not envy the situation in which the private merchants and the kulaks, these "excrecences" of society, were. They were not allowed to take part in the social-political life either.

The old "nationalistic" intelligentsia was an unacceptable stratum for the Soviet regime. It became a target for repressions from the very start. But as the new system also felt the necessity of having intellectual workers the government began to create their own "red intelligentsia".

Civil, criminal and labor codes were formulated with the purpose of strengthening the new social and economic system with legislation. A law reform was carried out and a procurator's office and the bar were established. The constitution of the USSR was adopted in 1924.

Industrialization policy

The restoration of people's economy had not been finished yet when the economic policy of the Communist Party turned from agriculture to industry. In December of 1925 industrialization became the main policy of the country. The main point of this policy as the 14th congress of the CP(B) stated, was the development of heavy industry



in the first place. This process demanded a large capital-investment; the USSR could not afford it. In spite of this the Soviet Union took a risk and made this step, for it was impossible to retain the regime if the country remained economically backward. The high level of industry was necessary for the development of people's economy and the defense of the empire.

The countries of the West avoided investing their capital in the Soviet Union. Neither the Bolsheviks were eager to have an active cooperation with capitalists. Therefore, the resources for the fast development turned to the old "milch cow" — the rural working population, strengthened the ways of getting finances from agriculture. Saving money inside the country was considered the financial foundation of industrialization. As for the capital-investment, the regime of the strictest economy, the increase of labor productivity, the mobilization of loans and deposits were thought to be necessary.

The subject of the country's industrialization, mainly the defining of the tempo and methods of its realization caused a new opposition and split among the party leaders. Trotsky demanded that industrialization be developed at the highest speed. In Bukharin's opinion it was better to build industry gradually, stage by stage. He gave preference to light industry. This controversy meant a hidden struggle for priority among its participants. Stalin, depending on Bukharin, defeated Trotsky and his followers first, and then got rid of Bukharin and the groups of Zinoviev and Kamenev as well.

The fight raging in the center was reflected in the Georgian reality as well. It was forbidden to criticize the decisions of the party. Persons in Georgia, having identical ideas with Trotsky (mainly the former "National-Uklonists") were accused of nationalism and chauvinism, some of "right-wing opportunism" and others were exposed as "a workers' opposition", and of being hostile to the interests of socialism, etc.

Gigantic industrial enterprises, groups of metallurgical enterprises, hydro-electric power-stations, machine-building plants and others were built in different parts of the Soviet empire according to the industrialization plan. Georgia was actively involved in these activities.

The natural and potential capacity of Georgia created more favorable conditions for the development of light industry, but proceeding from the interests of the empire, priority was given to building heavy industry. This course imposed upon the country essentially changed the character of Georgia's economy. It intended to turn an agrarian country into an industrial one.

The industrial enterprises were built in Georgia according to five-year plans, worked out in the center of the empire. The profile of the industrial enterprises was defined in the way that the republics should not be able to lead an independent economic existence without the assistance of other republics, Russia in the first place. This special and purposeful policy undermined Georgia's economic independence. The industry of the country became a component part of the industrial whole of the Soviet empire, thus becoming dependent on it. In this way, the centralized system of using the existing resources and that of the management regulation subordinated the meeting of local demands to strict centralization.

The forms and means of accumulating finances for industrial constructions were the same as in the whole of the Soviet Union. Besides the finances, given by the imperial budget, the significant source was the currency income, received from export. Georgia



exported manganese, diatomite, barite, marble, granite, silk, tobacco, wine, etc. The increased taxes, levied on *nepmen* and kulaks, made up a solid sum; the same can be said about the internal state loans (several industrialization loans, state bonds) that were obligatory for various layers of society, etc. Millions of roubles were saved by working in the regime of thrift and economy.

Workers' spiritual energy, a wide-spread "socialist emulation", "*subbotniks*" (doing some kind of work on Saturdays, receiving no pay for it), shock brigades "Stakhanov movement", etc. must be specially noted. A great part of society was very optimistic. Many of them believed that they would live in the socialist world of welfare which they were building with great difficulty, but very faithfully and with great faith.

Many large industrial enterprises were built in Georgia in 1925-1940, among them: Batumi oil-processing, Tbilisi metal constructing, Kaspi cement, Gori cannery, Kutaisi glass factories; Tbilisi broadcloth and worsted and Kutaisi silk-weaving factories, Zestaponi ferroalloy plant, Enguri paper-producing group of enterprises, clothes, tobacco and tea-factories. In Abkhazia – in Gudauta and Gali – spirit-distilleries began to work. The Upper-Avchala and the Rioni hydro-electric power-stations started working, automobile roads were built, the Surami Pass railway line was electrified, oil-prospecting work began, etc. The development of industry became distinctly militaristic before World War II.

The sped up industrialization hastened Georgia's economic development. Many towns and villages changed their appearance essentially in the '30s. Tbilisi population grew because a great number of the rural population moved there. In 1932, unemployment in the USSR was liquidated and the last labor exchange was closed. But the nominal wages of workers were not equivalent of the work they did. The living standard of workers and employees became twice as bad as it had been.

The uncontrolled exploitation of mineral deposits, felling trees in forests, polluting rivers, the sea and lakes, ignoring the ecological demands created danger for the unique nature of Georgia and threatened it with extinction.

The NEP did what was expected of it: the country avoided a serious crisis, the process of economic fall was stopped, the danger of people's uprising on social basis weakened too. The government fully prohibited the private sector in industry and trade. Fearing that the bourgeois reality might be restored, the Soviet political leaders abolished the new economic policy in the 1930s.

Collectivization of agriculture

The nationalization of land and its distribution on the principle of equalization were unable to stamp out the class structure, characteristic of the village life. The poor, average, and well-to-do peasants (kulaks), still existed as social classes. Herewith, the system of petty production of commodities remained the chief form of organizing the village economy. The new economic policy also assisted the development of individual farming. Under such conditions the Bolshevik regime would not have a secure foothold in villages; the State would not be able to use the agricultural produce, bread in the first place, for its needs.



The Soviet government worked out a plan to modernize the social-economic system of the village. A course of collectivization in the whole empire was adopted at the 15th congress of CP(B) in December of 1927. This course was to achieve the qualitative transformation of the branch and to make the village economy effective, according to official sources. In reality it was another, aggressive social experiment coming from above which was realized by means of unprecedented violence, by depriving the peasantry of the right to act as they liked and by destroying the traditional form of economy.

The collectivization process was to be voluntary. Peasants were to join the collective farms of their own free will, but in reality it was carried out in a naked administrative order, by means of repressions and terror and it turned into a great tragedy.

Collectivization was alien to Georgia's experience in economy. And what is more, it was basically against the Georgian way of landownership (the property passed from household to household by inheritance). The Soviet agrarian policy not only established a new social system in the village, but it caused the destruction of people's mentality, their turning into a faceless mass. The peasantry became a new kind of "the state serfs".

The formation of collective farms in Georgia went on against a heavy background. There were disturbances in Tbilisi due to lack of bread in the country in the winter and spring of 1928. By 1932 the crops even in the richest corn-growing regions (the Ukraine, the Northern Caucasus, Kazakhstan) were so scarce that millions of people died of starvation. The scarcity of crops was not caused only by unfavorable meteorological conditions. It was mainly the result of destroying the main producers of bread, the well-to-do (kulak) peasants' farms. "The liquidation of kulaks as a class" was an important part of the collectivization process.

The number of kulaks in Georgia did not exceed 1.5-2%, but the struggle against this "capitalist element" in villages was ruthless. At the beginning the oppression of well-to-do peasantry was carried out by economic methods (high taxes, refusing to give them credits, prohibiting the use of hired labor). Later on administrative-political measures were added to these steps (they were deprived of the right to vote, the children of kulaks were expelled from schools and higher educational institutions, etc.). But beginning with 1930 the state policy in regard to this layer of society became more radical and was expressed by the destruction of "kulaks" as a class.

This anti-peasantry campaign, coming from the center, resulted in injustice, license and violence. In many cases "a kulak" was an industrious peasant, having many children and living in a half dug-out hut, who had oxen, horses and one or two milch cows. The fate of such a "class enemy" turned out to be tragic. The head of the family was either to be physically liquidated or exiled to a far-away place, his property would be expropriated, or his estate ravaged. A little advanced peasant families were also found on the lists of those who were to be ruined; the latter usually refused to join the collective farms. These opponents of "the party line" were robbed of their property and driven out of their villages.

The peasantry turned to various forms of defense. Many of them destroyed their economy themselves, killed or sold their domestic animals and household tools, left their villages and went to towns. Many of them tried to go abroad (nine thousand people were arrested for the attempt of crossing the frontier in 1927 alone).

There were cases of squaring accounts with the activists of the collectivization movement, of destroying the property of collective farms, etc. In 1930 the inhabitants of



the Kiziki district in Kakheti got together at Tsnori railway station to stand up for 120 kulaks imprisoned with the purpose of exiling them to Siberia. The people, gathered at the station, demanded the liberation of the arrested peasants and the return of their property to them.

The government did not take any notice of these demands and sent armed detachments to the station to disperse the rebels by force. Two peasants were killed in this clash, two were wounded, and forty men were arrested. The repressions became more severe. "Communards" armed detachments were formed of communists and young communist league members with the purpose of stamping out the anti-collectivization movement. These detachments were first subordinated to the local militia, and then to the main political management (GPU), and struck villages and towns with horror.

The earliest forms of making the village economy common in Georgia were agricultural associations and communes. One of the first communes was established in the village of Samtavisi. The old houses of the community members were burned down and they were moved to a specially built hostel and forced to incorporate their whole movable and real property in the commune. In spite of this measure, the government was unable to keep the peasants in the commune. Many similar organizations that had sprung up in the mountain regions of Georgia also disintegrated.

Artels (associations for common work) that were supplied with agricultural equipment by the state were comparatively widely spread. Herewith, becoming a member of the *artel*, the peasants did not lose the right to retain their personal plots and subsidiary economy. It was the hired laborers, landless and poor peasants who took part in collectivization of their own free will. The other categories of peasants were made to become members of collective farms by means of agitation and propaganda, intimidating and the threat of arrest and exile.

According to the schedule worked out in the center of the empire, the entire collectivization of the village economy in Georgia was to be finished by 1933. The leaders of Georgia decided to finish it a year earlier and started to hasten the process artificially: they attacked the "kulaks" more vigorously and began uniting the peasantry in collective farms by force. While by October 1, 1929 there were about 900 collective farms in Georgia, two months later their number reached 1,400. And by the spring of 1930 64% of peasants' households were members of agricultural *artels*. Owing to this forced collectivization, tens of thousands of peasants left villages and moved to towns. People began to leave mountainous places as well. The government did not give peasants passports to make them stay in villages.

The Bolshevik influence on the village, unnatural as it was, went on with various kinds of violation in other parts of the empire as well. This caused great opposition and protests of the peasantry (over two thousand armed uprisings of the village laborers were registered in the whole of the USSR in 1930). J. Stalin was compelled to take the created situation into consideration and slow down the tempo of collectivization. He found it necessary to correct "the mistakes" and "deviations" that had taken place.

The smallest weakening of violence on the part of the government was sufficient to begin the disintegration process of artificially made up collective farms. The number of collective farms in Georgia diminished by half in a month's time, and in six month's time 64% of the farms was reduced to 15%.



However, despite the original failure of the collectivization plan, the Soviet government did not give up the idea of the agrarian revolution. It increased the financial, pecuniary and technical support of the newly created collective farms. The formation of the so called MTS-s (Machine-Tractor-Stations) turned out to be somewhat effective. They served the collective farms for a certain compensation, based on a contract. The state effected a certain compromise: the sped-up process of destroying "kulaks" was stopped, the collective farms were freed from paying taxes during two years, and a decision was adopted to give the land to collective farms for permanent use.

This reality made the peasantry yield and they became members of collective farms. The village laborers put up with the collective farms due to the compensation of their work according to the number of work-days, the distribution of crops publicly on the threshing-floor, etc. The use of agricultural technique, especially the appearance of a "fiery plough" — tractors in the fields — disposed the peasantry favorably towards the collective farms. One must also mention the psychological influence on the masses, the ideological work of party and komsomol organizations, of mass media and propaganda, spread by radio and newspapers.

The advanced collective farms also had the function of agitation. Such collective farms appeared in various parts of Georgia at the beginning of the 30s. These were the Zemo Kedi, Natanebi, Shroma, Okumi, Khutsubani and other collective farms. Their annual income exceeded a million roubles, and therefore they were a worthy example for others to follow.

The process of collectivization gained strength beginning in 1935. Crops, among them tea and citrus, increased. Professional personnel was prepared, agricultural technical schools were opened, educational departments for workers, schools for young peasants, short-term schools for agronomists and veterinaries, courses for tractor-drivers, and so on were established. Work aimed at the development of land-reclamation and irrigation, became more active. Before World War II began, 80% of Georgia's peasants were members of collective and soviet farms.

Many unsuccessful attempts were made in the country's economy in the 30s alongside the collectivization. First they attacked maize, a traditional culture in Georgia, and began to grow "more progressive" bochmeria and tea instead. They also intended to turn Georgia into a cotton-growing republic at one time, and young and old talked only about cotton. When it became clear that they would not be able to grow cotton because of the climatic conditions, they decided to grow wheat. To increase the production of wheat, fruit orchards, vegetable gardens and even fields where grass was growing were ploughed, but the problem of feeding Georgia with her own bread remained unsolved. However, all these experiments did great harm to cattle breeding, viticulture and fruit growing. The production of the latter was reduced.

Collectivization was carried out with great sacrifice, but the political and social-economic results of this experiment were more important for the empire. The Soviet regime managed to subjugate villages. A multi-million mass of the peasantry became loyal to the government. The category of well-to-do peasants (kulaks) practically ceased its existence, and the majority of poor peasants turned into a middle class. The village population became equal socially and economically by means of the so called equalization. A special stratum of Soviet society — collective farmers — was formed. They were the majority of the



village population. Village economy as well as industry appeared to be in the hands of the state. The government became able to use this powerful potential for the strategic interests of the empire.

Thus, from the point of view of the state, collectivization fulfilled its mission essentially. That was why it was declared to be "the greatest achievement" of socialism. However, from the point of view of people collectivization was such an unnatural phenomenon with its numerous negative features that the collective farms stopped their existence in almost all the former Soviet republics and were forgotten as soon as the USSR disintegrated. The same thing happened in Georgia as well.

Cultural revolution

The Bolsheviks considered the cultural revolution to be very important for strengthening the political regime. They thought it to be a significant stage of constructing socialism as well.

People of many nations and nationalities were united in the Soviet empire. Some of them had a highly developed culture and a long tradition of statehood, while others lacked it. The government decided to equalize peoples of extremely different culture, civilization and religion by means of a cultural revolution.

To raise and develop the population's level of culture, to change the society spiritually, to form Soviet intelligentsia, to bring up a "new man", a builder of socialism and communism – this was the essence of the cultural revolution and its official objective formulated by the government. It began by liquidating illiteracy, a radical reformation of the public education, a wide cultural construction. In a short time noticeable results were achieved.

Important changes in this sphere appeared in Georgia in 1918-1921 in the times of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, but there was still much to do. The new government's policy was educating masses of people. Not only the children of school age, but a great part of adults sat down at school desks. Alongside primary schools, village reading rooms, groups for liquidating illiteracy, etc. were established. A network of Abkhazian and Ossetian primary schools was organized. Over 4,500 schools of three stages (four-year schools, seven-year schools, nine-year schools) functioned in Georgia before World War II. In some of them teaching was conducted in the Russian, Armenian, Turkish, Greek, and other languages.

Dismissing the old personnel of teachers, the government started accelerated training of new teachers. Teacher training and pedagogical institutes were opened in Kutaisi, Tskhinvali, Sukhumi and Batumi. In 1930 general-compulsory education was introduced. The education of children under school age was also taken care of. According to the data of 1939 all-Union census 113.4 people with secondary education and 11.2 with university education were registered per 1,000. According to this index Georgia was the first in the entire empire.

The Bolshevik regime set a task of bringing up children to the Soviet school besides educating them. This bringing up was based on the communist ideology and suited the interests of the Soviet State. The school, as part of the soviet system, was politicized from beginning to end. Children of October, Pioneer, Young Communist League and trade



union organizations acting in schools served the ideological and political formation of schoolchildren.

In 1920s and 30s the network of higher educational institutions in Georgia also greatly developed. In 1922, the Tbilisi Academy of Arts was opened. In 1929 the Georgian Polytechnical and Agricultural Institutes were established. In 1930, the Tbilisi Medical Institute began to function, etc. Teaching in all of them was conducted in the Georgian language. In this respect the work of Tbilisi University, the great center of the Georgian culture and science since 1918 was of invaluable importance. If the Georgian scientists had not founded the national university before the Soviet regime was established, the Soviet government would have opened a university where lessons would have been conducted in the Russian language as it happened in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and other "union" republics. This would have considerably hindered the formation of national scientists, specialists, and intelligentsia in general.

By 1941, 19 higher educational institutions with 25,000 students functioned in Georgia. The traditional aspiration of the Georgian youth for knowledge and education was given a wide scope, but this positive fact had some negative tendencies too: the pursuit of quantity damaged quality. Because of this, Georgia was unable to give work to such numbers of students. A great part of this contingent went to different parts of the empire or joined the ranks of "intellectual proletariat". According to Geronti Kikodze's words, "the intellectual professions were filled by hungry fortune seekers".

The Bolshevik government turned the higher education into a sign of social priority and used it as a means of proletarianization of the intellectual stratum. There were no entrance exams to Soviet higher educational institutions up to 1932. Students were mainly chosen from the circles of working and peasant youth by the party and trade union committees. As N. Bukharin used to say thousands of "writers", "red professors", "worker reporters" were "punched", etc.

The communist regime selected professors and teachers according to the class principle. It persecuted eminent scientists and scholars of the old generation, accusing them of "nationalistic aspirations", and promoted politically trustworthy personnel in their place. In 1931 Ivane Javakhishvili, the founder of Tbilisi University, was dismissed from his post. The same fate was shared by Andria Benashvili, Philippe Gogichaishvili, Giorgi Tsereteli and many other prominent scientists and scholars. The number of red professors increased in higher educational institutions. They took the place of genuine national teachers.

One of the main tendencies of the cultural revolution was changing the social structure of intelligentsia, the ideologization of culture and dissociating from the old cultural heritage. The main task of the regime was creating the so called proletarian culture and the intelligentsia born of the working class, which was to depend on class ideology, "communist bringing up", and the mass character of culture. People were appointed on leading posts, among them in the sphere of culture too, not from the point of view of their professionalism, but by their social status. They were to be from the strata of workers, peasants, or hired laborers. They would attend short term training courses, the so-called "red professors' courses" and "become specialists" of some branch of science. For instance, a metal-worker V. Tanishvili was director of Tbilisi Opera House for years.

On the basis of Tbilisi University it became possible to develop many branches of science in Georgia. The development of research work was facilitated by establishing



several institutions with this purpose, among them, the scientific-research institutes of tea and subtropical cultures, viticulture, geology, mathematics, chemistry, physics; by opening the astrophysical observatory and doctor training institute, etc. Georgian scientists created acknowledged scientific schools of mathematics, physiology, geology, history, philosophy, linguistics and other branches.

In 1935 the Georgian branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR was established, and in 1941 Georgia's Academy of Sciences was founded. Many top-quality discoveries, inventions or results of Georgian scientists were introduced into practice, but the free development of scientific ideas was hindered by the permanent supervision of "competent organs", the bureaucratic government, the administrating and regulating on the part of the Communist Party and the state and so on. The Soviet science was developing by itself, having no contacts with the outer world, in "a closed space". Therefore, it was very seldom that the achievements of the Georgian science passed beyond the borders of the Soviet Empire. Its "international arena" was the center of the empire, as a rule.

The Soviet government paid great attention to the publishing business. Over 94 million copies of about 24,000 titles were published in twenty years since 1921. This was mainly ideological and propagandistic literature edited in many copies and published repeatedly. Books of Georgian classics, works of various authors were published, etc; but at the same time books by the authors opposing the regime, or the works of emigrant writers were pulled from library shelves. Political emigrants were taboo.

New magazines and newspapers appeared at the beginning of the 20s. Periodic press was published in many languages besides Georgian – in Russian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Abkhazian, Ossetian. All printed publications were subordinated to strict censorship. In 1925 radio-broadcasting was added to the mass media.

Museum activities also began developing. In 1922, Georgia received a number of museum and archive collections that had been taken to Russia. Among them were historic documents, manuscripts, and excellent specimens of art. In 1929 a museum of Georgian literature was founded. Ilia Chavchavadze, Akaki Tsereteli, Vazha-Pshavela, Egnate Ninoshvili, Vladimir Mayakovski's houses were turned into museums. Two new parks of culture and recreation were opened in Tbilisi.

The Soviet government paid great attention to culture and education. It is proved by the network of libraries that appeared in villages and towns. By 1940 there were about 100 libraries in Georgia whose book fund reached 1,750 copies. New clubs, houses and places of culture were built in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Chiatura, Tkvarcheli, etc.

The widening of the network of cultural institutions was impressive, but their quality was far behind their quantity. These establishments served spreading the communist ideology, the propaganda of "Soviet patriotism" more than the development of genuine culture.

At the beginning of the 20s one could still feel creative pluralism in Georgia. The co-existence of different cultures and dialogue between them were possible, but very soon the Soviet government became authoritative in the sphere of culture as well. Groups and unions of various trends in literature and art were prohibited. Their place was occupied by centralized "creative unions" of intelligentsia (the writers' union, the artists' union, etc.) that were easier for the regime to direct.



The Soviet regime needed the socialist culture expressing its will, and the society, obeying this will, lacking the quality of real creativity and independent thinking. The Soviet government aspired to turn culture into a political weapon, to make it serve the strengthening of the regime. The Bolshevik model of culture was built by inculcating the spirit of class irreconcilability, instead of humanism by means of subordinating science, literature to the party control, by regulating the spiritual life of the society and suppressing national consciousness.

The domination of the party principle and the method of the socialist realism in literature served the same purpose. The specially invented method of "the socialist realism" was to create the reality desirable for the political regime, presented in bright colors and imbued with optimism, and not true reality. The function of the Bolshevik policy in regard to culture was an absurd conception of the culture "national in form and socialist in content".

Any deviation from this Stalinist "bright idea" or "distortion of the party line" was punished severely. But the creation of this line created serious danger of the unification of national cultures and their assimilation with the Russian culture.

The complicated process of mental changes, the reappraisal of values, and the loyalty to the regime damaged Georgian culture greatly. It had to make a sacrifice and to agree on compromise, be a hostage of the political system and its servant as well in the conditions of the Soviet dictates, terror, repressions and ideological press. However, the culture managed to find a way of escape, inside itself. At the cost of certain concessions, it saved the essential – the Georgian spirit and the national originality.

The recognition of the political reality, the seeming reconciliation to the Soviet regime or a true loyalty to the national culture conditioned some concessions on the part of the government as well. In 1934 the great Georgian writer and public figure, Ilia Chavchavadze, was rehabilitated. In 1937 a decade of Georgian art was held in Moscow. In the same year the 750th anniversary of Shota Rustaveli's "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" was celebrated.

Political system

It was the Bolshevik Party that was at the head of the Soviet Empire. The Bolsheviks also kept the reins of both political and state affairs. The political regime was first called the proletariat's dictatorship and then the Soviet government. However, neither the proletariat nor the Soviets ever had a real power in the Empire. At the beginning the power was in the hands of the Bolshevik leaders (V. Lenin, J. Stalin, T. Trotsky, etc.), later it was individually taken by J. Stalin and still later it appeared in the hands of the nomenclatura. Accordingly the dictatorship was created by the party leaders, Stalin, and the nomenclatura.

The regime was totalitarian. The state controlled all the spheres of society and personal life. The punitive institutions had special rights. These were as follows: the State Political Department (OGPU), the Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) and the Committee of State Security (KGB). There were innumerable prisoners' camps, colonies and special settlements in the country.



The Soviet political system was based on the Communist ideology –Marxism-Leninism that was elevated to a state rank. All other ideologies, political movements or parties were banned. This strictly centralized hierarchic government was headed by the leader – Joseph Stalin. His personality was made sacred. “Wise”, “sinless”, “the most just” and “the one who was always thinking of the welfare of workers”. Stalin was considered to be “the father and teacher of peoples”.

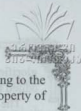
The Soviet Empire was formally built on the principle of federation. It was officially called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. However in reality the Union Republics were more like colonies (some people call them half-colonies), than the subjects of the federation enjoying full rights. They did not have the rights of independent states; they had the rights of administrative units, dependent on the “elder brother”, Russia, which in reality was a parent-state. The Soviet army, located in non-Russian republics, including Georgia, was factually the Russian army and only answered to the central government. The Communist Party permanently controlled the armed forces, mass media, etc.

Collecting unrestricted rights in the hands of the Communist party was justified by the great collective goal: the idea of building communism. The whole energy of the society was turned to the realization of this task common for all the empire. Personal interest, private lives, and personal individualism were victims of this equalizing principle and collectivism. The human being’s role in this gigantic state “machine” was that of a “bolt”. His declared civil rights and liberties were unprotected in reality. “The consciousness of a Soviet citizen” was defined by his being in the service of the rulers and by obeying them.

The characteristic feature of the totalitarian system is political terror and repressions. The latter had a systematic character. Loyalty to the regime for a considerable part of the population was conditioned by “social fear”. The state made certain circles of society loyal to it by granting them privileges, but there were also a great number of people who served the country with faith and enthusiasm. This situation was not fortuitous: the social and economic conditions in “the country of workers and peasants” of the previously oppressed poor layers of society were considerably improved. It is true that their wages and other income were not quite adequate of the work they did, but these people had many opportunities for employment, guaranteed living wage, and sufficient opportunities of self-realization. They had lacked all that before. All these factors put together delighted the above-mentioned strata of the population and made them like the existing system. It made them work enthusiastically and have a fighting spirit.

The Communist political regime was a mask of formal lawfulness, justice and other façades. On December 5, 1936, a new constitution was adopted in the USSR. Theoretically “the chief law of the country” was not worse than the constitutions of the world’s civilized countries. Many democratic norms and rights were mentioned in it, but their majority was fiction and was not realized in practice.

Before the constitution was ratified it was officially announced that socialism had been achieved in the country and the liquidation of hostile bourgeois classes had come to an end. The new social structure of society looked different: the working class, the peasants’ class and a stratum of socialist intelligentsia born in their circle.



The political basis of the state were the Soviets of Worker Deputies, according to the Constitution; as for the basis of economics, socialist (state and cooperative) property of means of production was legalized.

Similar to the previous Soviet constitutions, the freedom of speech and press were declared, as well as the right to have meetings, rallies, unions, etc. The system of government underwent certain corrections – the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union was granted the function of the supreme legislative body instead of the congress of Soviets. The Soviet of People's Commissars was a supreme executive body. The election system also underwent some change: the restriction of the right to vote according to the class of the citizen belonged to was abolished and general, equal, direct elections by secret ballot were established.

The Union Republics were given the right to leave the Soviet Union. It was an important innovation, though formal. The 1936 Constitution abolished the Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Federation. Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan acquired the status of separate union republics inside the Soviet Union.

The new constitution of the Georgian SSR was ratified by a special 8th Congress of all Georgia's Soviets in March, 1927. That very year new constitutions were adopted by the autonomous republics of Abkhazia and Ajara. All these documents were based on the main principle and regulations of the USSR Constitution.

The first elections to the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR were held in June 1928. Philipe Makharadze was elected chairman of the newly established Supreme Soviet at its first session. Valerian Bakradze was appointed chairman of the Soviet of people's commissars.

Beginning in the 1930s, professional revolutionaries were replaced by young Bolsheviks devoted to Stalin in the leadership of the Georgian Communist party. The same thing happened throughout the Soviet Union. In the years 1931-1938 Lavrenti Beria was at the head of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. He was succeeded by Kandid Charkviani. In the same period there was a notable increase of local personnel in the governmental bodies. The question of appointing people at important posts was decided in Moscow. The necessary condition of getting a post was loyalty to the regime and a good knowledge of the Russian language.

The party leaders of the so called Union Republics also had a share in strengthening the political regime. They became "leaders of the local significance". Stalin's favorite, Lavrenti Beria, was distinguished in this respect. He had been in the security service before he became head of the republic. Beria did not trust the Bolshevik personnel in disfavor and selected secretaries of regional committees of functionaries of a lower rank from the members of his former department. The new head of Georgia obeyed the will of the Kremlin, used police methods in his work, and guarded the Soviet regime not only in Georgia, but in the whole of the Southern Caucasus. Besides being the first Secretary of Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks in Georgia, he also headed the Regional Committee of the Party in Transcaucasia.

It was owing to L. Beria that the process of praising and glorifying Stalin began in Georgia. In 1935, he wrote the history of Transcaucasian Bolshevik organizations in which he emphasized the role of "the great leader" in the revolutionary movement. This



glorification was also reflected in the short course of the history of all-Union CP (B), edited by Stalin and published in 1938. It became a standard version.

The construction of socialism and constitutional changes in the Soviet country did not alter anything in Georgia's political or economic life. Russia's occupational regime, established here in 1921, was only disguised by the constitution. Georgia still continued to be an administrative unit of the Empire, without sovereign rights, subordinated to Moscow and governed by her instructions.

Political Repressions in the Second Half of the '30s

All of the achievements of the Soviet system are overshadowed and seem less important due to unparalleled repressions that were periodically carried out throughout the whole country and took the lives of a great number of people.

The violence, unrestricted by law, was an essential feature of the regime that its creators called the proletariat's dictatorship. The Soviet system, as a practical embodiment of this dictatorship, was based on this very violence, terror, and reprisals. Mass repressions in Russia and then in the Soviet empire were carried out sometimes with a social motive (the liquidation of Cossacks, the persecution and oppression of the clergy, the destruction of kulaks), sometimes on the economic basis (the abolition of private property, the confiscation of lands, the nationalization of industry), at other times with political aims (the struggle for retaining power, opposing the hostile political forces and such forces inside the Bolshevik party itself) and also on ethnic grounds.

"The red terror" that had begun in Russia during the civil war became state policy, and taking a modified form, lasted for decades. The Soviet political system had one clear-cut feature: it permanently fought against somebody or was getting ready for this fight. And it always found enemies, sometimes real and sometimes invented. The Bolsheviks considered almost the whole world to be their adversaries. While capitalist countries were thought to present danger from the outside, inside the country every man having some property, every free-thinker, every man of dignity was imagined to be an enemy. Such people were labeled as "people's enemies", "traitors of their motherland" and were shot; not only were the guilty ones punished, but the suspects too. The reprisals were widely used to frighten the population, to subjugate the people, guarantee loyalty to the regime, etc.

Georgia did not escape the punitive measures either. Squaring accounts with the anti-Soviet parties began in 1921. The result was that some of them emigrated to foreign countries, part of them were victims of repressions, and still others were driven out of the social-political life. The next target was aristocracy against which they fought with the following slogan: "We must bring the number of the Georgian nobility to zero!" To achieve this aim such unworthy means was used as setting poor homeless peasantry on *tavads* and *aznaurs* with the principle of "taking by robbery what was amassed by robbery", encouraging them to raid their families ruthlessly, to plunder their property, etc.

The regime took a bloody revenge on the insurgents of Svaneti and Pshav-Khevsureti, especially on the participants of 1924 insurrection, on the people who were against



collectivization, but the political repressions, carried out in 1936-1937, were unprecedented by their scale.

The Soviet government paved the way for this trial, called "a great evil" in the whole empire in advance. They created the atmosphere of mutual disclosure, spying, denouncing, fear and psychosis. They put parents in opposition to children and vice versa, families, neighbors, friends and relatives to one another. With the motive of saving themselves, people mercilessly denounced their acquaintances, colleagues, and friends and tried to expose "people's enemies", "saboteurs", and "wreckers". Nobody was protected from the terror.

The repressions were supervised by the Kremlin. The number of those to be arrested and shot were defined there, but nobody forbade the local rulers to show enthusiasm in overfulfilling the "plan" either.

There were reasons for discontent in Georgia as well as in the whole of the empire. There were presumably opponents of the regime, former members of the destroyed anti-Soviet parties, representatives of intelligentsia who put up with the restriction of freedom with difficulty and did not speak openly of the national pain, but it was impossible to give an organized form to the activities of the opposition and it did not have such a character. In spite of this, Judgement Day was arranged for the whole nation.

The political repressions in Georgia are mainly connected with the name of Lavrenti Beria who had the posts of the first secretary of Georgia's Central Committee of the Communist Party (B) and the first secretary of the Transcaucasian Regional Committee in 1931-1938.

A purge was carried out among the Communist Party ranks several times in Georgia. Open trials were conducted of the "National Uklonists" (those who had deviated from the "right" course), of Trotsky's followers, or the participants of the right or left-wing deviators. The famous Georgian Bolsheviks M. Orakhelashvili, B. Mdivani, Sh. Eliava, L. Gogoberidze, M. Okujava, M. Kakhiani, the party leaders of Abkhazia and Ajara Autonomous Republics, of South Ossetia – N. Lakoba, E. Eshba, Z. Lortkipanidze, G. Sanakoev and others were sentenced to death and shot. Young cadres loyal to J. Stalin were appointed in the places of the repressed.

Besides the leaders of the Republic, hundreds of representatives of the lower sections of the government, specialists in the sphere of economics and military circles, teachers and professors of higher educational institutions, students, writers, workers of art, culture, thousands of ordinary people fell victim to the repressions. The prisoners were tortured and forced to plead guilty, to sign fictitious examination records, to accuse innocent people of sabotage, admit membership in counter-revolutionary organizations and participation in terrorist or sabotage acts, and a thousand kinds of other quite groundless crimes.

At first the investigation was conducted in the organs connected with the court, but in a very short time the repressions took such an all-embracing character that the right to judge was given to so called "troikas" (a secretary of a district committee, chairman of the district council executive committee, head of the militia). A "Troika" had the right to arrest a person, to exile him or her and even have him or her shot.

Apart from these three people, a sentence could be imposed by a military board, by a court-martial, a special board of court, etc. A great number of people were killed by their resolutions, 12,000 Georgians were sentenced to being imprisoned and took their punishment





in prisons and concentration camps (Magadan, Solovki, Norilsk, etc.). Only very few were lucky to return to their home country after a long-term exile.

All the layers of society suffered from repressions in Georgia, but the main target of these political repressions was the intelligentsia. Its victims were the famous Georgian writer Mikheil Javakhishvili, a distinguished poet Titian Tabidze, a talented producer Sandro Akhmeteli, an eminent musician and conductor Evgeni Mikeladze, prominent scholars Grigol Tsereteli, Vakhtang Kotetishvili and many others. Poet Paolo Iashvili committed suicide in the building of the writers' union as a sign of protest. Great scholars such as Ivane Javakhishvili, Shalva Nutsubidze, Simon Kaukhchishvili, Vukol Beridze, Mikheil Zandukeli and others escaped physical destruction, but they had undergone torture.

After J. Stalin's death the Communist Party condemned the practice of political repressions, and the majority of the convicted were rehabilitated. However, nobody tried to establish who was a victim and who the executioner during the repressions. Though there were cases when many of the people who had taken part in destroying others also became victims of the repressions.

By the 1930s, the totalitarian regime had created such a psychological climate in the country that the groundless denouncing of others, slander and the like were not considered to be disgraceful actions. Such actions were believed to be "on the watch of socialism", "the revolutionary vigilance of a person", an action that was praiseworthy and honorable.

During the political repressions, one part of the society lost a human image, became immoral and morally degraded. They denounced one another due to self interest, envy, wishing to take possession of other people's property, or some other vicious reason. They condemned people unjustly and turned their backs on the families of the repressed, avoided contacts with them, etc. Taking the side of the victim meant a senseless self-sacrifice. Not only raising one's voice in defense of the repressed persons, but speaking of them in a positive aspect, was risky.

Fortunately, many people remained honorable in the conditions of that unbearable physical and psychological terror. They did not inform on their neighbors and relatives. They treated the orphaned children of the repressed humanely and took care of those who were destined to perish.

The Soviet regime accomplished several tasks with the help of the repressions: 1. J. Stalin got rid of the main political competitors in his fight for power, 2. All important opposition groups were destroyed within the Communist party, 3. separatist tendencies of national republics became considerably weaker, 4. The population's loyalty to the regime was achieved, etc.

The repressions seriously damaged Georgia; apart from the numerous victims among the population, the Georgian nation suffered from the greatest moral and psychological trauma. The year of the climax of the Soviet terror and repressions, 1937, entered Georgian history as a black date. It is considered to be a symbolic expression of all the atrocities of the totalitarian regime.

Leaders of the national-liberation movement



Kote Apkhazi



Kakutsa Cholokashvili



Gogita Pagava



Valiko Jugeli



Kote Andronikashvili



Rostom Muskhelishvili

World War II



Joseph Stalin



Konstantine Leselidze



"Our motherland calls us" (author I. Toidze)



Defence of the Caucasus



The anti-fascist rally in Tbilisi



Raising of the Soviet flag
on the Reichstag



Georgia in the Years of World War II

Was this war patriotic for the Georgian people or not?

The world war that began on September 1, 1939 when Germany invaded Poland and that ended on September 2, 1945 with the capitulation of Japan, was a great challenge for Georgia. Georgia became a participant of this war as a member country of the Soviet Empire. Nobody had asked her whether she wanted to take part in it or not. It happened after the troops of fascist Germany invaded the territory of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, and occupied considerable part of it.

From the very outset J. Stalin declared the war unleashed against German, to be a patriotic war of the Soviet peoples and appealed to each of them to defend their common mother-country. Since that time the war between Germany and the Soviet Union has been called a great patriotic war. But was this war patriotic for the Georgian people?

The only motherland for a Georgian has always been and is Georgia, and could not have been and was not the USSR. It is true that the latter was called the voluntary union of the so called union republics with equal rights, in reality it was an artificial formation, made up under compulsion. The non-Russian peoples, the Georgians among them, were made members of the union by force. Therefore, the part of Georgia's population that understood that their country was made part of this Bolshevik empire by first conquering it, abolishing its national statehood, did not think of the Soviet Union as of their motherland.

Georgian emigrants were of the same opinion. They had never become reconciled with the aggression committed against Georgia and fought to restore the freedom and independence of which they had been deprived.

The Georgian people, alongside the other peoples of the Soviet Union and of the world, bravely fought against fascism and many Georgians gave up their lives for this great and just cause. But still it was not the fight "for freedom of one's own home country". Fascist Germany never occupied Georgia's territory and no battles took place there. It was the Russian, Byelorussian, and Ukrainian peoples that fought for their motherland. It was on their territories that the enemy managed to gain a foothold for a certain period of time. And of course, it was a patriotic war for these peoples, but not for Georgia.

Beginning the war against the Soviet Union, Hitler was convinced that this huge "ethnic conglomerate" would not be able to ward off Germany's blow and would disintegrate into separate national units. But in this respect there were no serious complications for the Soviet Union, caused by the war. It retained unity and strength. However, the government took preventive steps. As soon as the war started all German colonists were exiled from Georgia. In 1944 their fate was shared by the Moslem population living in Samtskhe-Javakheti and other borderline districts. About 70,000 Turks, Kurds and Hemshins (Armenian Moslems) were exiled to Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

That the Soviet State was monolithic it was mainly the result of the totalitarian nature of the regime. The slightest deviation from the directives of the Kremlin was severely punished. The government ruthlessly fought against deserters, panic-mongers, dissidents. The appeals and addresses of Stalin and the Communist power during the war were the orders of a severe character. Special blocking units whose duty was to shoot on the spot



everybody who would retreat without having an order to do it acted in the rear of the military detachments. Soviet soldiers were not allowed to be taken prisoner, etc.

Agitation and propaganda were very important factors. Establishing of the title of hero of the USSR, the moral stimulation of military valor or labor activity, rallying slogans really influenced people. A great majority of people were doubtlessly enthusiastic and had a great faith in their leader – Stalin. Joseph Stalin's being of Georgian extraction was not at all a minor factor in Georgia. This was the reason that alongside the total mobilization thousands of young people, boys and girls from Georgia as well, went to the front as volunteers.

It is also noteworthy that a considerable part of young people, brought up in the years of the domination of the Communist ideology, especially those that came from the workers and peasants' social strata, were imbued with the "Soviet patriotism". They were ready to give up their lives for the "Socialist motherland". It is necessary to respect the selflessness of the people who bravely fought against the enemy. The memory of the dead soldiers and surviving veterans should be appreciated properly, but for it is not at all necessary to call the war, fought by them, patriotic. It must be given its traditional name: World War II.

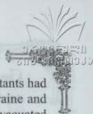
The transformation of the people's economy in the way suitable for the necessities of war

Soviet leadership subordinated the whole power to the interests of defense from the very beginning of the war. Total mobilization was carried out. In a very short time the whole of the Soviet Union turned into a military camp. The economy was transformed and it began to work for the needs of the front. The strictest discipline was established not only in the army and on the front, but in the rear as well. It is true that no battles took place on the territory of Georgia, but all the same it offered a great sacrifice for the victory on the enemy. About 700,000 soldiers and officers were sent to the front from Georgia, and half of them did not return home. Herewith, the country successfully coped with all the tasks necessary for the war.

The most important factories and plants began producing pistols, machine-guns, mortars, cartridges, spare parts for tanks, etc. instead of the products of people's economy. Tbilisi aircraft works produced destroyers, "Yak I" and "Yak 3" type aircraft. Poti, Batumi, Sukhumi shipbuilding plants also carried out military orders. So did the Kaspi cement factory, Kutaisi lithopone and other chemical enterprises.

During the war the exploitation of Georgia's minerals was particularly increased. The military industry was regularly supplied with manganese, coal, oil, molybdenum and other strategic raw materials. The Zestaponi ferro-alloy factory worked with high productivity. In 1942 Tkvarcheli, which had become a major coke producing center, was declared to be a town. In the following years the construction of the Rustavi metallurgic enterprises and the city of Rustavi was resumed.

Alongside the heavy industry, textile, light industry and local enterprises worked hard. In these enterprises women were mainly employed. The front approaching Georgia's borders, the food industry had to be satisfied only with the local resources for a long time.



It caused significant difficulties. By this period the number of Georgia's inhabitants had increased due to the refugees who had left the occupied territories of the Ukraine and Russia's central regions. The country gave refuge to many children's homes evacuated from the frontline zones; Georgian families adopted orphaned Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian children, and hundreds of youths of different nationalities. Several higher educational and technical institutions were moved to Georgia and several military hospitals were founded. The Tbilisi Opera and Ballet Theatre gave shelter to Kiev and Kharkov Opera-houses, Tbilisi Film Studios did the same for Yalta film-studio, etc. These conditions resulted in a shortage of food products and a rationing system was introduced.

With the active participation of the Georgian population a defensive line was built to defend the Black Sea ports and the approaches to the Dariali. Jvari and Mamisoni passes were fortified. The Black Sea railway main line was constructed with strategic purposes and new highways were being built. German war prisoners were widely used on these construction works. The local population treated them kindly.

The Georgian railway transported fuel, strategic raw materials and loads received from the USA on land-lease, and also served the transportation of the refugees. Georgia's civil aviation helped the army, transporting soldiers to the sections of the front that were difficult to reach. It also transported arms and equipment.

The war created a complicated situation for Georgia's agriculture. The mass calling up for military service of the able-bodied population left only old people, women and teenagers in villages. The front was given a greater part of tractors and other equipment necessary for farm work, leaving only horses and oxen to plough and sow and do other work. The production plan of collective farms was enlarged; they were to deliver twice as many products necessary for the front. The members of collective farms were deprived of the right to use cooperation. The distribution of the crops according to the work days was practically stopped, but in spite of this, each of the collective farm members was to have 150-200 work-days per annum.

The Georgian village managed to cope with all these difficulties by the extreme mobilizing of forces, by using children's labor, etc. The population did without many things, endured hunger and cold to do everything for the front. They donated money, state loan bonds, and jewelry to defense foundations. People sent warm clothes, linen, foodstuffs to soldiers. Donations were collected to buy military technique and armament. The Georgian people's only labor donations in 1941-1945 were over 3 billion roubles.

All this made the financial conditions of the population very bad. The demographic situation also became much worse due to the total mobilization. The birth-rate decreased. The unbearable living conditions increased mortality.

Women's work, their amazing endurance and strength in the war years must be specially mentioned. Tens of thousands of Georgian mothers, whose labor was measured by working-days and indices of production by the government, showed an impressive example of moral heroism. They remained faithful to husbands gone to war or killed in the war, did not put out the fire in their hearths, retained their homes, and brought up and put on life's road a healthy, and industrious generation.

The Orthodox Church played an important part in arousing patriotic feelings of both — the people fighting with arms against the enemy and the laborers in the rear. Georgian science, cinema, theatre, music, fiction and prose served the interests of defense.



Georgians on the fronts, in the guerilla and European resistance movements

Georgians had often fought under other people's flags in other people's wars before, but World War II differs from them all by its scale and the number of victims. Seven hundred thousand people from Georgia fought against the enemy on various fronts, stretching along three thousand kilometers.

At the beginning of the war 126,000 Georgian soldiers and officers were doing their military service in the Soviet Army. The majority had begun fighting against the fascists from the very start of the war. Since that time until the end of the war there was not a single operation in which Georgians did not take part. They fought on the land, on the sea, in the air, and in partisan detachments on the territory of the Soviet Union, and many European countries.

Georgian divisions played a significant part in the victory over the fascist Germany. Before the war the Kremlin had abolished such military formations, but in 1942 national military units were formed again. Nine Georgian divisions were established in Georgia. Three of them defended the USSR-Turkey frontier. All the rest of them were sent to the front as soon as they were formed. Over 200,000 Georgians participated in the defense of the Caucasus united in national divisions or other military units. The 414th, 276th, 242nd Georgian divisions became famous in the battles as did the Armenian and Azerbaijani national formations. In the Crimea, in the vicinity of the Straits of Kerch, tens of thousands of Georgian soldiers and officers were killed due to the ill-considered plan of the commander and the member of the military council of the front-Mekhlis. The 224th Georgian division was almost fully destroyed.

Georgian soldiers and officers, alongside the others, bravely fought at the approaches to Moscow. They fought for Leningrad. They fought at the approaches to Stalingrad, the Kursk Bulge, to liberate Byelorussia, the Ukraine, Moldova, and to drive the fascists away from the Baltic countries. Many thousands of Georgian soldiers and officers participated in the attack on Berlin at the final stage of the war. A Georgian intelligence officer Meliton Kantaria, together with the Russian M. Egorov, had the honor of raising the flag of victory on the Reichstag. About 8,000 Georgian soldiers and officers were in the ranks of the Soviet Army, fighting against Japan. The following people made a name for themselves in the whole world: junior sergeant Shota Gamtsemlidze rushed under the leading tank with a number of hand grenades and prevented the enemy's attack at the cost of his life. The sniper Irakli Kavtaradze covered the embrasure where shooting came from with his body. An engineering battalion under the supervision of Captain Irakli Tsitsishvili built a 720 kilometer long bridge in four days' time. One hundred and sixty five men from Georgia were awarded the title of hero of the USSR. Among them were the pilot Chichiko Bendeliani; Yaroslav Ioseliani, the captain of a submarine; Meliton Kantaria, an intelligence officer; Zoya Rukhadze, a partisan; Konstantine Leselidze, an army commander; Vladimir Janjgava, a commander of a division, and many others.

A partisan movement started on the occupied territories from the very beginning. The soldiers and officers of military detachments who had been specially sent to the enemy's rear participated in the partisan's fighting together with the local population. A great number of Georgians were united in these units. They, alongside the people's avengers,



destroyed army units and equipment, arranged diversions, and carried out many important tasks. A partisan regiment formed in the Ukraine was headed by David Bakradze; Ivane Shubitidze and Vladimir Talakvadze distinguished themselves in Byelorussian partisan movement. The fascists tortured and killed the Georgian partisan girl, Zoya Rukhadze, in the Crimea.

Georgians also took an active part in the resistance movement of the European peoples. At the beginning of the war when the Soviet army's actions were unsuccessful, part of the Georgian soldiers and officers found themselves in captivity in German camps. These camps were situated on the territories of several east or central European countries. Hundreds of Georgian war prisoners who had escaped from the camps got in touch with and joined the partisan movements in Albania, Yugoslavia, Poland, Italy and France. They took part in liberating these countries from the fascist conquerors.

It must be noted that Georgians fought in the ranks of Polish armed forces in the army of Kraiova. In 1921 the government of Poland gave refuge to some officers and about a hundred cadets from Georgia. They entered military service in Warsaw and during the war they held high positions in command. They were members of the general military headquarters. These were as follows: generals Zacharia Bakradze, Aleksandre Zakariadze, Ivane Kazbegi, Aleksandre Koniashvili, Kirile Kutateladze, and Aleksandre Chkheidze, Colonel Valerian Tevzadze and others. The Germans arrested a well-known Georgian scholar-theologian, Archimandrite Grigol Peradze for cooperating with the Polish liberation movement. This eminent public figure died in the gas chamber of the fascist concentration camp in Osventsim in 1942. Later on the Georgian and Polish Orthodox Churches declared him a saint.

The history of the Polish partisan movement is adorned with the name of the Georgian officer Vasil Manjavidze ("Vasya Gruzin") who was awarded the highest prize, the gold cross, for his heroism.

Many Georgian emigrants and former war prisoners participated in the French resistance movement. The number of Georgian warriors, fighting in the ranks of the maquis was about two thousand men. One regiment of Georgian partisans "Maquis Georgienne" (Commander Otar Ishkhneli, Commissar Aleksandre Kalandadze) consisted of 1,500 men. This regiment liberated the towns of Toulouse, Carmo, Albi and many other villages and settlements of Southern France.

The Georgian emigrant Dimitri (Bazorka) Amilakhvari distinguished himself in the fight against the fascists in Northern Africa. He died heroically in the well-known battle at El-Lameini in 1942. Colonel Amilakhvari whom Charles de-Gaulle called "a commander of a miraculous valor", is a national hero of France. His name is given to the 1956 143rd graduates of the well-known St-Sir military school of this country.

Georgian soldiers and officers bravely fought against the German fascists on the Appenine Peninsula too. Among the partisan detachments acting in Italy Georgian detachments were distinguished. Over 400 soldiers and officers fought in them. The people's hero Phore Mosulishvili, Giorgi Varazashvili ("Captain Monti") and others immortalized their names.

The government of the Soviet Union did not take into consideration the Georgian partisans' accomplishments in the victory over the fascism. Instead of meeting them with



honor, they met them with repressions. Many of them for having been war prisoners were exiled to Siberia and Central Asia for many years.

On the other side of the front, Georgian political emigratants in the years of World War II

Georgian emigrants, divided into parties and lacking internal unity, presented a certain political force before the Second World War. The Georgian emigrants were dispersed in various countries of Europe, but their majority lived in France. The approach of the war and particularly the expected collision of Germany and the Soviet Union made the Georgian political emigrants more active. In September of 1939, Georgia's government-in-exile declared officially that "the Democratic Georgia was on the side of the allies in the conflict that had begun". A little earlier in a letter sent to Georgia Noe Zhordania had appealed to the Georgian people to be vigilant and advised them not to believe fascist propaganda. He said that "while the Soviet troops were deployed on the territory of Transcaucasia the question of armed insurrection should not be put on the agenda in order that unnecessary human losses be avoided".

Georgian emigrants were not unanimous in their opinion of the declaration of the war. Many emigrants joined the French army and went to the front. Former cadets fought against the German fascists side by side with the Poles. But there was also another part of the emigrants who were pro-German, and who were greatly pleased with the first achievements of the *Vermacht* in the war. The Georgian emigrant society "*Tetri* (white) *Giorgi*", some members of the National-Democratic Party and the non-party representatives of intelligentsia agreed to cooperate with the German governmental and military circles. Their position was determined by the principle: "Our enemy's enemy is our friend". The defeat of the Soviet empire in the war with the fascist Germany was to become a precondition of Georgia's liberation.

As it had happened a quarter of a century before, a plan was drawn to restore Georgia's state independence with the assistance of Germany. It is noteworthy that almost the same people from both sides who had fought to achieve this aim in the years of the First World War were involved in this matter.

The *Abwehr* (the military secret service) and the Ministry of Foreign affairs were the organs who were closer to the Georgian emigration. Their prominent representatives (Admiral Kanaris, Count Shuhlenburg and others) were also of the opinion that Georgia's sovereignty should be declared on condition that this region should become the mainstay of Germany's eastern policy. As for the authorities of the German Oriental Ministry, they saw the whole Caucasus and Georgia too as Germany's future colonization base. Hitler also supported this point of view. But Kaiser Wilhelm II did not approve the German-Georgian project of liberating Georgia and returned it to its authors.

Georgian political emigrants asked the President of Finland, Marshal Mannerheim, to help them. It was done with the purpose of influencing the Führer. At the request of Evgeni Gegechkori Gustaf von Mannerheim solicited the head of the Third Reich and with a special memorandum advised him to properly solve the Georgian question. This attempt was not followed by a desirable result.



In spite of the failure, the representatives of the emigrants did not cease to try to gain Germany's support. In 1942, under the aegis of the Ministry of the Orient in Berlin, a Georgian National Committee headed by Mikhako Tsereteli was established. Zurab Avalishvili, Giorgi Magalashvili and Spiridon Kedia were invited to be members. The committee had only consulting functions. Nevertheless, Hitler banned it, and only allowed the establishment of a Georgian union headquarters that would have the function of technical assistance. The duty of this new administrative body, whose head was Spiridon Kedia, was to make it easier for the Germans to use Georgian war prisoners in the war.

It is true that the Genoa International Convention forbade using prisoners of war, but the Germans did not obey it. As for the leaders of the Georgian headquarters, their motivation was different: the war prisoners in concentration camps were doomed to death. But their being included in the ranks of German military formations gave thousands of their compatriots a chance to avoid physical destruction. Georgian emigrants, cooperating with Germans, still hoped to liberate Georgia with the assistance of Germany. In their opinion, if the Germans entered the territory of Georgia, Georgians should declare independence immediately and form a provisional government. The fascists would find themselves before a fact and would not abolish it. This was what the emigrants supposed. In such conditions the military detachments of the Georgian war prisoners might become the nucleus of the national army. A great number of Georgian war prisoners, and many Jews as well whom Mikheil Kedia presented as Georgians, remained alive. In the years when France was occupied Georgian Jews were greatly helped by the members of the Georgian government in-exile and other political leaders. These facts are specially mentioned in the expositions of the Jerusalem museum of "Memory and Fame."

The first military detachment of emigrant Georgians was formed in Paris and Vienna in 1940. It was a special landing unit called "Tamar I". In 1942 another unit of this kind, "Tamar II," was made up of Georgian prisoners of war. A military formation "Bergman" was also made up of Georgians, so were several military battalions, etc. Some of them were even sent to the Caucasian front, but their defeat frustrated both the Germans and Georgian exiles' plans.

The German commandment sent some of the Georgian detachments to Italy, some to Denmark, France, and Holland. The Georgian battalion deployed on the island of Taxel in Holland rose against the Germans in April 1945. Over 500 Georgians and many inhabitants of the island fell victim of this unsuccessful rebellion.

World War II gave rise to certain hopes among the nationalist forces in Georgia as well. A narrow circle of the Georgian intelligentsia discussed a plan of action for the situation if the German troops crossed the Caucasian Range. More activity was noticed among the students. An illegal committee was organized under the guidance of the writer Levan Gotua. Kote Khimshiashvili, Giorgi Imerlishvili and others decided to start an anti-Soviet movement. Toward this purpose they formed an organization of rebels. The organization "*Samani*" appeared in Tusheti, headed by Adam Bobgiashvili (nationalists, fighting for making Georgia a prosperous country), etc. Neither of the above-mentioned groups managed to succeed. Security organs nipped their activities in the bud. The court martial put 17 people to death. Several "conspirators", arrested for anti-Soviet propaganda, were sentenced to a long-term exile.



Georgia in the Post-War Period

The restoration and development of economics

The war and its outcome determined the future of many countries in different ways. The fate of many nations was radically changed. The large population of the Soviet Empire, victorious in war, also expected the renovation and reformation of life. These people defeated Fascism with heavy sacrifice. The intelligentsia supposed that the political regime would be somewhat lighter and some democratic concessions would be made. The workers were convinced that their material welfare would considerably improve in the conditions of peace. A great part of the peasantry wished that the collective farms would be abolished and that land and property would be given to them as their private property. All these hopes were soon frustrated, for the totalitarian system in the country practically remained the same.

After World War II, the international situation did not develop the way the Kremlin bosses had imagined it would.

They believed that the destruction of the world economy would cause a revolutionary explosion and establish socialism in the European countries (Germany, Italy, and France). This illusion did not come true. Western Europe evaded this fate by means of a correct economic policy and great efforts of the USA. George Marshall, Secretary of State of the U.S.A. worked out a project ("The Marshall Plan"). According to this plan, the US gave a multi-billion subsidy to western countries to restore their destroyed economies. The U.S.A. offered financial support to the Soviet Union and its satellite East-European states as well, but J. Stalin rejected this offer. The Bolshevik Empire continued the policy of self-isolation and the ideological and political opposition with the capitalist world. The USSR was not alone now. It was supported by the East-European and Asiatic countries, the so-called countries of the socialist camp. These were the countries where Moscow had established regimes.

The West was alarmed by such an expansion of socialism. Joint action was necessary to stop the advance of communism. The "Cold war" broke out. The North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) was established. Other military alliances appeared too. In 1955, the "Warsaw Pact" was established to oppose them.

In such a situation, the demilitarization of the USSR was realized only partially. Great financial sources were used to modernize the military-industrial complex and to create new kinds of weapons. An atomic bomb was successfully tested in 1949 and a hydrogen (thermonuclear) bomb in 1953. An atomic icebreaker was constructed in 1957. The process of opening up the cosmos also began. In 1957, the first Soviet satellite was launched into space, and on April 12, 1961, a man was sent into orbit. After a mass demobilization, the number of the Soviet soldiers and officers increased again and reached six million by the beginning of the 1950s.

It was particularly difficult to restore the people's economy under such conditions. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union, being a victorious country, had more possibilities now, all the more so as she received substantial sums of money as reparation from defeated countries. As for booty, she took possession of numerous technical devices. Alongside the mobilization of these and other resources, people's activity and enthusiasm were very



important. The free labor of hundreds of thousands of war prisoners and other prisoners was added to it.

In the post-war years, restoration and development of the Georgian economy went on a large scale. Metallurgic, nitrate fertilizers and cement factories were constructed in Rustavi; an automobile plant and a glass package factory were built in Kutaisi; a cotton textile group of enterprises was built in Gori; a shipbuilding yard in Batumi, an electric locomotive repair shop, a plastic and a cognac factory, ceramics, furniture and milk groups of enterprises were built in Tbilisi. New mines began to work in Tkibuli, Tkvarcheli and Akhaltsikhe. Many tea and wine factories, numerous enterprises, producing food products appeared in Ajara, Abkhazia and some other regions of Georgia. The construction of Shaori, Ortachala, Samgori hydroelectric power stations was completed. The process of reconstructing and enlarging the existing enterprises went on as well.

The dynamics of industrial construction was far ahead, providing it with engineers and skilled workers. The government collected laborers from villages. They were mobilized and sent to factories and plants, their training was sped up, and so on. However, it also became necessary to bring a certain number of specialists and workers from other parts of the empire, from Russia and the Ukraine in the first place.

The branches of food and light industry developed quickly. Great attention was paid to the production of consumer goods, etc. In spite of this, a chronic deficiency of many necessary products was felt in the Soviet Union.

The situation in the spheres of communication and transport improved. The same can be said about the postal and telephone services. At the end of 1956, television broadcasts began. The automobile roads and railway network grew, as well as the length of electrified railway. Freight turnover increased. Important results were reached in renewing the sea transport. In 1952 the construction of Tbilisi metro started, the first line began working in 1966.

Technical progress was introduced into various branches of industry. The process was slow, but steady. The restored and new enterprises were equipped with modern equipment; the amount of mechanization was growing, etc. However, labor productivity was low and the quality of production was still poor, considerably lower than the world standards.

Alongside the restoration of the economy, the number and the quality of workers and employees changed. The technical and cultural level of the working class became higher. A considerable part of workers got an education in higher educational institutions and special technical secondary schools without leaving their work.

The number of women, among them Georgian women, in the economy grew. The specific share of Georgians in the general number of working class in the 1950s was 49 percent. In 1954, the population of Georgia (3,676,000) equaled that of the pre-war period.

The industrial construction work greatly sped up the tempo of urbanization. While only 30 percent of the population of Georgia had lived in towns before the war, in 1959 this number exceeded 42 percent. The population of towns increased because the village inhabitants moved there. The internal migration process mainly harmed the mountain zone of Georgia, where many villages became uninhabited.

The increase of the town population required building blocks of flats and widening the town's economy. The government invested capital in this sphere after the war. Alongside



communal apartments, whose inhabitants had common kitchens and even toilets, separate apartment houses began to be built. It is true that the increase of the number of apartments fell behind the growth of the population, the apartments had low ceilings (the so-called Khrushchovkas) and the living space was small, but thousands of people considerably improved their living conditions. Gradually central heating, natural gas, hot water systems were installed. Apart from towns, new establishments of health care, such as outpatient hospitals, polyclinics, chemist's shops, were built in regional centers and big settlements.

The positive changes caused by the restoration and development of the people's economy had negative sides as well. For instance, the construction of heavy industry was incompatible with the interests of Georgia's natural development. The Rustavi metallurgical group of enterprises was planned and built without considering its economic expediency. The ore necessary for making steel was brought to Rustavi from Azerbaijan. In Kutaisi, automobile plant trucks were built with parts brought from different republics. The situation was the same in many factories and plants that were subordinated to the Soviet Union or some other republic. Eighty to eighty-five percent of their production was intended for the service of the Empire. The industries of the Soviet Union were not able to produce things independently. They were to be chained economically to one another and to the center. The artificial integration of economics was part of the Kremlin's imperial policy and had a shade of colonialism.

In about ten post-war years, over one hundred industrial enterprises were added to Georgia's economy. According to the Soviet statistics, Georgia's industrial production grew by 71 percent. It must be noted that this somewhat exaggerated achievement was reached mainly due to fresh investments and not due to labor productivity.

Changes in agriculture

World War 2 hampered the development of intensive branches of agriculture: tea growing, viticulture, fruit and citrus growing. The breeding of cattle was impeded. It is true that Georgia's village laborers were able to maintain their pre-war vineyards, but the scarcity of vines grew considerably, crops of tea became smaller due to the deficiency of mineral fertilizers, citrus plants were destroyed on several thousands of hectares because of frosts, etc.

Agriculture continued to be the weakness of the Soviet Empire. This was mostly caused by the system of collective farms. The peasant was not interested in the result of his labor on the collective plot, because he did not feel himself to be its owner. He was to give the greatest part of the crops to the state. The peasantry earned their living by working on their personal plots. The compensation for the work on collective farms was very small. According to the acting legislation, each household could own about 0.25 to a hectare of land in the village. However, he was to pay a tax in the form of a natural produce (grain, meat, milk, eggs, etc.) of the crops, grown and received on this plot.

"The necessary minimum of work-days" established during the war was not abolished. If the collective farmer did not fulfil the norm, he was threatened with arrest or by losing his personal plot of land, and the latter was the main source of existence for the peasant's family.



The collective farmers were still under strict control. They were not given passports in order to prevent them from leaving villages. Leaving the collective farm without permission and avoiding work on collective farms was punished by law.

In the post-war Soviet Union, priority was given to restoring heavy industry. Agriculture still occupied an inferior place. In spite of this, the investments in this sphere became considerably larger.

The means for developing agriculture were provided both from the budget of the Republic and the income of the collective farms. However, the plans drawn up in Moscow exceeded the possibilities of Georgia to develop this branch of economy. They did not take the interests of the local population into consideration and were against the Georgian tradition of developing the economy.

If allowed, the peasant in Georgia was able to arrange his economy to have sheep, cows and to grow grain, fruit, grapes, pumpkins, melons and watermelons. However, the Kremlin was speeding up the process of specializing the regions and collective farms of Georgia. A number of regions of Kakheti and Imereti were declared to be vine growing regions, Ajara and Guria regions, growing subtropical plants, and Kartli, a fruit-growing region. The collective farms of Tsiteltskaro (today's Dedoplistskaro) and of Abasha were made to grow cereals.

Georgia became the producer of tea, citruses, tobacco and fruit for the whole Empire. Georgia produced over 95 percent of the tea and citruses grown in the Soviet Union. There was great demand for the Georgian wine, etc.

In 1947, the posts of secretaries of the central committee in the branches of agriculture and industry were established in the Communist Party of Georgia with the purpose of controlling the process of hastening the restoration of agriculture and economics. An assistant-director's post was established in the political part in machine-tractor stations, party-organizations were founded on collective farms, etc.

In 1947, a process of amalgamating collective farms into bigger units started throughout the Soviet Union. In the opinion of the Empire leaders, it was to enhance the efficiency of agriculture and to turn the unprofitable collective farms into strong and rich ones. The number of other collective farms decreased almost by half as a result of amalgamation, but the economic effect was far behind the expected results.

The Soviet Union party leaders and the Georgian ones, following their example, discussed the difficulties in the sphere of agriculture, adopted thousands of resolutions and decrees, carried out hurried experiments, etc. The results of these futile efforts were temporary and unstable.

The official statistics declared that the five-year plans in agriculture were carried out successfully, but obvious lagging behind was concealed beyond these fictitious data. The branch suffered a decline. The problem of providing industry with raw materials, and the army and the town population with food products was still unsolved.

By the 1950s, some signs of escaping stagnation in agriculture appeared in Georgia. Land-reclamation work started. The Samgori irrigation and draining systems of Colchis Lowland were constructed, and the Alazani and some other irrigation systems were reconstructed. However, the majority of Georgia's irrigation canals were still on a primitive level. There were over a hundred machine-tractor stations in Georgia in 1953. They owned 440 tractors, 1,200 grain combines and 9,000 trucks. The level of mechanization rose. Machines for the cultivation of subtropical plants, for clipping tea-leaves and tea-



harvesting were invented, but the level of using electricity in agriculture was still low, the labor productivity remained at the same level, and the financial position of collective farmers was not improved.

The money reform carried out in the USSR in 1947 was a heavy blow to the peasantry. It had a confiscatory character. Ten old roubles were exchanged for one new rouble. The village laborers lost what small savings they had in one day. From the point of view of the state, the reform assisted eradicating inflation and stabilized the financial system destabilized by the war.

The population felt great relief when in 1947 the food rationing system was annulled. The government began to raise the salaries and wages of workers and employees gradually and lower retail prices of consumers' goods. Between 1948 and 1954, prices became lower every year. This process was realized seven times, though the prices in 1954 were much higher than those of the pre-war period. Herewith, the quantity of products was not sufficient and did not meet the growing demand. The Soviet economic policy depended on administrative-imperative and directive methods instead of the principles of free market and was unable to produce more.

Post-war repressions

The population of the multi-national Soviet Empire remained loyal to the Communist regime during the hard times of the war. Millions of people, both on the front and rear, showed boundless loyalty and devotion to the country. The people who had won victory over fascism deserved more confidence and better standards of living from the government in the post-war period.

The totalitarian system would not allow freedom and in this respect, nothing changed in the Soviet Union after the war. The political power of the Empire did not intend to give more rights to the population. Even the thought of easing the regime was unacceptable to them. Very soon after the war was over the Kremlin made the strengthening of its ideological control over society its main task.

Alongside with this ideological campaign, which turned into a new wave of repressions, there was a noticeable activation of social-political life. The pre-war corps of deputies was renewed in the Soviets of various levels in 1946-1952. Direct elections by secret ballot of people's judges and the jurors were held and congresses of public organizations, also of the Young Communist League, trade unions and the Communist party were convened. The CP(B) congress, convened in 1952, even changed the name of the party, removing the word Bolshevik from it. Respectively, the Georgian Communist Party also changed its name. However, all this was only propaganda: an impression was to be made that the society was an active participant of this political process, that they had a say in the affairs and they took part in governing the country. Nevertheless, it was not easy to deceive the people who had suffered from the war. Apart from the intelligentsia, a large group of soldiers and officers who while being prisoners of war had seen what the Western world was really like and returned with vivid impressions, created great difficulties in this respect. The myth that socialism was superior to capitalism was destroyed once and for



all. The foundation of the belief in false social stereotypes and Communist ideals was shaken.

This tendency in Georgia was strengthened by the activities of Georgian emigrants abroad for the freedom and independence of their country. These activities were known in the Soviet country then better than before the war. The Soviet special services tried to win the leaders of the emigration over to their side and in this way to paralyze their attempts. Only a few eminent Georgian emigrants returned to Georgia (Ekvtime Takaishvili, Samson Pirtskhalava, Shalva Karumidze and others).

The government was compelled to take counter measures. On the one hand, they began to take care of raising the material welfare and the cultural level of the population; resources were found to enlarge the wage fund, to finance health care, education, science, and important projects in the spheres of culture and art, etc. On the other hand, an attack was launched on the ideological front. Its aim was "to tame" the intelligentsia, "to curb" the free thought. All ideas different from the Communist ideology were considered to be hostile, bourgeois ideology and were banned. The first attack was made against "cosmopolitanism" and "worshipping the West". In August 1946 the Central Committee of the all-Union Communist Party issued a special decree and accused the editorial boards of the magazines "*Zvezda*" and "*Leningrad*" of being indifferent to politics and of publishing ideologically harmful works devoid of principles and ideals. The writer Mikhail Zoshchenko and the poet Anna Akhmatova were specially mentioned as the authors whose work "did great harm to bringing up young people and were unacceptable for the Soviet reality".

Similar repressive decrees were adopted concerning drama theatres and cinema art. A little later similar decrees were adopted regarding the opera and painting. The party demanded that writers, the workers of culture and art, should describe the modern life of society, their "permanent progress", the optimistic mood of the Soviet people and their heroic spirit and their loyalty to socialism in their creative work.

According to the task set to them, Georgia's party leadership was to discover cases of relapse into "the deviation from the Soviet reality" in Georgian fiction. With this purpose, the editorial boards of the magazines "*Mnatobi*" and the newspaper "*Literatura da Khelovneba*" were changed. The great interest of some writers (Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, Shalva Dadiani and others) in historical themes was condemned and the increase of poetry lacking ideology was censured. The fact that no great epic describing the post-war life was written was considered to be a great omission. The criticized authors were compelled to admit and "repent their mistakes" and promise to correct them.

Several performances were removed from the repertoire of some drama theatres. The Georgian composers Andria Balanchivadze, Grigol Kiladze, Shalva Mshvelidze and others were reprimanded for using "technical-innovatory" methods in music and for seeking "formalistic" ways of expression. The well-known painters David Kakabadze and Lado Gudiashvili were attacked for "the formalism and primitivism" found in their work.

In 1958, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party declared the decrees adopted on ideological questions to be annulled, but what was spoiled could not be remedied. Besides, the Party continued controlling creative processes and interfering in them.





Science did not escape ideological aggression either. The widely known all-Union discussions presented one of the forms directly dictating scientists how to do their research. These discussions were held in the Soviet empire in 1947-1951 in the branches of scholarship and science such as philosophy, biology, physiology, linguistics and political economy. These discussions of scholars and scientists were supposed to assist searching for the truth and developing science, but in reality they had a political aim. In some cases, Stalin himself turned out to be the highest expert. Each discussion usually ended in a directive resolution that was a political dogma in its essence. In spite of this, it was declared a scientific truth and it was obligatory to share it.

Each scientific idea, be it in the sphere of humanities or natural sciences, was rejected and its author persecuted if it was not in accordance with Marxism. Cybernetics and quantum mechanics were declared false sciences. The development of physics was hindered, and the science of genetics was destroyed.

History was subjected to strict dogmas. Not only recent but also ancient history was falsified and presented in the Soviet fashion. The most important task of the Soviet historiography was to show the progressive role of the Russian people in the history of humankind. Another evil tendency was displayed: a lion's share was given to Russian history in works dealing with the history of the USSR. As for the histories of other peoples, they were presented on a page or two. Herewith, the superiority of the Russian people and their protective and educational mission in bringing civilization to backward peoples was emphasized. The fight of the oppressed peoples for freedom and independence in the Russian empire was considered a reactionary movement, etc.

It is obvious that ideological dictates had a negative influence on the Georgian science as well. Eminent Georgian scientists were both acknowledged and esteemed, but the notorious accusations of being nationalists or cosmopolits were hanging like the sword of Damocles above their heads.

In October 1948, eleven students of Tbilisi State University were tried for participating in the nationalistic movement. Nine of them were accused of fighting against the Soviet system and were sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment each. Future writers Otia Pachkoria, Givi Magalaria and others were among the repressed.

The Communist government carried out another punitive operation in the whole of the Empire in 1951. This time the Soviet soldiers and officers, former prisoners of war, people and their families who had relations living abroad, were declared "hostile elements". The majority of them were deported to Central Asia and Kazakhstan.

Deportations in Georgia were prepared secretly. About 20,000 "criminals" were gathered in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, and Sukhumi, among them women, old people and children. They were thrust into freight cars and sent to Central Asia on December 25, 1951. The majority of the deported were representatives of the intelligentsia and their family members. Many of them did not reach their destination. Samson Pirtskhalava, a well-known national and political figure who had returned to Georgia from abroad at about the age of 80, wishing to be buried in his native land, died on the way, and was buried in a strange land. Those who survived this unbearable "journey" were settled in the steppes of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and made workers on local farms. The repressed people were allowed to return to their homes only in 1954.



Repressions based on ethnicity were not alien to the totalitarian regime either. The obvious example of this is the so-called case of the Megrelians, which also happened in 1951 and was directed against Lavrenti Beria.

Lavrenti Beria was one of the most influential figures in the highest echelons of the government of the Soviet Empire. He had been Stalin's favorite person for quite a long time, but finally his power reached such heights that the leader decided to take him down a peg or two. At J. Stalin's request, the Minister of State Security S. Ignatyev concocted a criminal case against persons of the Megrelian origin working in Georgia's party and state bodies. The second secretary of Georgia's Communist Party Central Committee Mikha Baramia, general procurator V. Shonia, the leader of the Komsomol Mamia Zodelava, and the secretaries of the district committees of all the Samegrelo District were arrested. Many Megrelian workers in the economic sphere who did not have high posts were dismissed from work and expelled from the party.

The arrested were accused of anti-Soviet activities, Megrelian nationalism, having aspirations of separating from the USSR and becoming part of Turkey, of being the agents of foreign countries, etc. None of these accusations had a real foundation, however. Many false witnesses and volunteer informers were found that testified against the unjustly detained people. This shameful campaign ceased when Stalin died. The people repressed because of the "Megrelians' case" were released in April 1953 by the resolution of the Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee. All of them were fully rehabilitated.

In the years, 1952-53 Georgia's leaders were changed several times. Akaki Mgeladze became first secretary of the Central Committee of Georgia's Communist Party in April 1952 instead of Kandid Charkviani. A year later this post was occupied by Aleksandre Mirtskhulava, and in September 1953 by Vasil Mzhavanadze. The post of the Chairman of the Soviet of Ministers of the Georgian SSR was first taken by Valerian Bakradze and then by Givi Javakhishvili. This post had been occupied by Z. Ketskhoveli before them.

In accordance with the changes in the upper echelons of power, the leading personnel were renewed in Georgia's regions several times as well.

Liberalization of social and political life

On March 5, 1953 J. Stalin died. The leader was mourned sincerely by many people both in the Soviet Union and beyond its borders. Many people breathed with relief. Stalin had not left a political successor. The power was taken by G. Malenkov, L. Beria and N. Khrushchev. The former became chairman of the USSR Soviet of Ministers, the latter was his assistant, and Khrushchev became head of the Central Committee of the communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The epoch of the Soviet totalitarian regime seemed to have ended after Joseph Stalin's death, but in reality Stalinism continued its existence in the USSR for quite a long time without Stalin. Fight for power had not stopped. Lavrenti Beria became its first victim. He was arrested and shot as "a political adventurer" and people's enemy. Soon G. Malenkov was dismissed from his post though he survived physically. Nikita Khrushchev took hold of the highest state and party posts and essentially became the main ruler of the Empire, like Stalin.



Certain liberalizations of social and political life, which later on acquired the name of the "Thaw", began on the initiative of L. Beria very soon after Stalin's death. This process started by releasing political prisoners and exiled persons from concentration camps. The rehabilitation of the unjustly repressed happened on a wider scale in the period of Khrushchev's rule. Tens of thousands of the German war prisoners were set free and returned to their home country. The censorship and the government's control over the sphere of creative work and art became lighter. The leaders of the Soviet security whose names were connected with many evil deeds and crimes were punished. The military board of the USSR Supreme Court sentenced to death L. Beria's closest colleagues Rapava, Rukhadze, Krimian and others. The trial was held in Tbilisi. They were made to answer for framing people, for arresting masses of innocent people, and for torturing and shooting them.

These new tendencies were felt in the Union republics too, but their political and economic independence did not increase. Khrushchev's people replaced the personnel of Stalin's times almost at every level. Vasil Mzhavanadze became Georgia's party leader.

The change in the supreme political power was reflected in the international relations of the Empire. The Soviet leader paid visits to several foreign countries. Relations with Yugoslavia were improved to a certain extent; the diplomatic contacts with Japan were resumed, etc. The course of "peaceful coexistence" with the capitalist world was taken in foreign policy; however, important steps were also made to strengthen the socialist camp. In 1955 "Warsaw Treaty" was formed. The USSR did not cease exporting the revolution. It assisted the process of breaking the colonial system and was at the head of the international communist system. The attempt of the Soviet country to deploy the atomic rockets on the island of Cuba ("the Caribbean crisis") strained relations with the United States of America and nearly became the cause of a new world war.

The period of "thaw" did not last long. In 1956, the Soviet regime showed its aggressive essence both inside the country and abroad. In the spring of that year, peaceful demonstrators were ruthlessly punished in Tbilisi's streets, and in November of the same year Soviet tanks suppressed the Hungarian people's demand for national liberty.

The tragedy of March 9, 1956

Among other methods, Stalin had used a certain clever technique in his struggle for power. He did not oppose the leader of the proletariat Lenin, who died in 1924. On the contrary, he made a vow at his coffin to be faithful to him and to strengthen his power by acting in the name of Lenin. Of course, there was much coming from Stalin in the Soviet political system and in "the Soviet model of socialism", but Stalin did his work in the way that it should be impossible to dissociate it from Lenin. Anyone who made Stalin his target was sure to hit Lenin too.

Nikita Khrushchev, being at the head of the Soviet Empire, had not considered this fact; he tried to square his accounts with the dead Stalin so that Lenin and "Soviet socialism" would not be harmed. He began to fight against Stalin, but he did not reject Lenin and Stalin's ideological heritage.



The Twentieth Congress was convened in February 1956. At the final meeting, Khrushchev made a long speech "Concerning Stalin's cult". The new "leader" exposed the old one as having carried out mass repressions in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1950s and accused him of having ignored the collective leadership, of having exercised his power for evil purposes, etc. N. Khrushchev asserted that socialism had been "deformed" during Stalin's rule. He said that the social-economic hardships facing the Soviet Union were created by Stalin's personal characteristics, and not by the Soviet totalitarian-bureaucratic system.

Khrushchev's assessment was not founded on a profound analysis of the question. It was only a one-sided, superficial explanation of the phenomenon. Instead of emphasizing the necessity of correcting the deficiencies of the regime, he turned his criticism towards Stalin as a personality. This looked like a belated squaring of accounts with Stalin and in many cases anti-Georgian declarations were added to it.

Khrushchev's speech concerning the personality cult was not published, but the campaign of condemning the cult spread widely. Many writers, especially in Russia's press, vilified Georgia and the Georgian people because Stalin was Georgian by origin. The Georgian people considered it unjust and became indignant, and the situation became strained.

Stalin had many opponents as well. "The Great Leader" was praised and glorified greatly in Georgia, in the whole of the Soviet land and beyond its borders as well. Stalin was worshipped in many foreign countries, and it is not at all surprising that his cult should have appeared in Georgia. As for Stalin himself, he had felt no special fondness for Georgia. In the years of his rule Georgia had not enjoyed any priorities or privileges compared to the other peoples of the Empire. During the period of political repressions, Georgia suffered no less than the other peoples, and probably more. The Georgian people suffered greatly in World War II as well.

It was his compatriot youth that took great pride in Joseph Stalin being Georgian. Besides, it was known that the leader stood at the head of the whole socialist camp and determined "the political pulse of the planet". The unexpected and rough criticism of Stalin, who had been worshipped like God in his life, the accentuating Stalin's being Georgian in creating the personality cult caused discontent and a negative reaction among the population of Georgia. The Georgian society, especially the student youth, rallied in protest.

The disturbances began on March 5, 1956, the third anniversary of Stalin's death. The central streets of Tbilisi filled with demonstrators. A grand meeting started at the foot of the monument to Stalin in the public garden on the right bank of the River Mtkvari. It lasted for several days. A great number of the representatives of the intelligentsia participated in the meeting together with students, schoolchildren, workers, and employees. Georgia's Party leader Vasil Mzhavanadze spoke to the demonstrators several times, promised them "the immortality of Stalin", and asked them to disperse in order to avoid the expected danger. All was in vain.

At that time the eminent public figure of the Chinese People's Republic, Marshal Chu De, was in Tbilisi. He avoided speaking to the demonstrators, but promised numerous delegations of the participants of the meeting that he would tell Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese people about what he had seen and experienced.



The stormy echo of Tbilisi resounded in other towns and regions of Georgia. Many people hurried to Tbilisi from there. Thousands of peaceful meetings were held everywhere. The demonstrators carried the pictures of Lenin and Stalin and Soviet slogans. At first they demanded condemning the resolution of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in which Stalin was criticized and insulted. On March 9, the meeting adopted a resolution of dismissing Khrushchev from his post and demanded the formation of a new Soviet government with V. Molotov at its head.

The topic of Georgia's independence was raised and the call was heard, "Down with colonialism! Long live free Georgia!" The meeting addressed the peoples of the Soviet Union, asking them to support Georgia.

The political demands of the demonstrators were within the frame of the Soviet constitution, but the Kremlin ordered that the demonstrators be punished with bullets. Units of the Soviet army attacked the peaceful participants of the meeting with armored vehicles. Over 23 people were killed and about 80 were wounded. Over three hundred people were arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Several of them were exiled. The bodies of the killed were given to their families on condition that they would be buried secretly.

The tragedy of 9 March was not officially made public. The government did not punish anybody for the massacre in Tbilisi. The crime was hushed up and what had happened was declared, "to have been a restoration of the social order". In connection with these affairs, some leading figures of Georgia were dismissed from their posts. Vasil Mzhavanadze got away only with a reprimand for the "mistakes and defects" revealed in his work. The resolution of the CPSU central committee, while assessing the events of March 9, blamed the Georgian people for nationalism and chauvinism and reeked of obvious cynicism.

Nikita Khrushchev's attitude towards Georgia was so negative that the Georgian military units, formed during the war, were disbanded; several Georgian generals and officers were dismissed from the military service, being considered unreliable. It was forbidden to admit Georgians to the Military Academy, etc. Information exists that Khrushchev had a great desire of deporting the Georgians but was unable to realize his wish.

The March 9, 1956 tragedy had a great moral and psychological effect on the Georgian nation. On that day, many people lost faith in the Communist Party forever and the illusion of Soviet "bright future" was dispelled for them. The latent national movement was stimulated. Several illegal organizations were founded. They secretly spread the propaganda calling for Georgia's liberty. Secret printing houses began printing and spreading anti-communist leaflets and publications, the members of "the Union fighting for the freedom and independence of Georgia" were getting ready for the assault on Khrushchev, etc. The thought of freedom and independence of their motherland became the main task for a considerable part of the Georgian nation.

Alongside this, the strengthening of depression and the pessimistic mood among people was expected. The government tried to evade this phenomenon and to cheer up the population by a large-scale patriotic act. At the suggestion of well-known Georgian historians, the 1500th anniversary of founding Tbilisi was festively celebrated in the autumn of 1958. Festivities lasted three days. This celebration was also important because it had been planned in Georgia without the permission of the Kremlin. By celebrating the jubilee



of their own capital "independently", the Georgians expressed a kind of protest against the violence and great-power chauvinism of the Center.

Georgia in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s

An unsuccessful attempt of modernization

From the very beginning of the 1960s, it became obvious that the process of modernization started by N. Khrushchev did not produce a desirable effect. The conclusion arrived at the Twenty-First CPSU Congress in 1959 about "the outright and final victory of socialism in the USSR" and the beginning of "the wide-spread building of communism", was no good. Still more Utopian was the new program of the party (the third one) which said that in about twenty years the building of the material-technical base of Communism would be over and by the 1980s the country would live in communism. In this period of time the "formation of a new man" was to be reached and simultaneously such abundance of production was to be amassed that would make it possible to distribute it in accordance with the demand. Another senselessly ambitious objective that the Soviet Union would be able to overtake and outstrip the United States of America economically, i.e. it would produce more products per person than the USA was also unrealizable.

Khrushchev's economic innovations and administrative changes lacked economic foundation and scientific argumentation (e.g. disbanding machine-tractor stations and selling the equipment to collective farms, the artificial and forced amalgamating of collective farms, the mass reforming of collective farms into Soviet farms, the establishing of regional, town, or republican soviets instead of branch ministries of people's economy formed on the territorial principle).

The fever of administrative reorganization coming from the center embraced Georgia as well. New structures were formed and established, personnel were changed, but the system of management remained directive, a departmental monopoly and the socialist foundation that caused this negative phenomenon were retained.

The Soviet state expended enormous energy and financial resources on the "epopee of virgin soils", on cultivating the virgin and fallow soils of North Kazakhstan, Siberia and other places. This program was to solve the problem of supplying the population with cereals. Georgia also took an active part in this grandiose enterprise. Thousands of students, a great amount of agricultural machines, a great number of machine-operators and specialists were sent to virgin soils from Georgia for years. Over 40 million hectares of arable land were cultivated in five or six years, many farms were founded, etc., but still the amount of crops was much smaller than had been planned. In 1963, there was a crisis in supplying the population with bread in the Soviet Union. The rulers of the Empire were compelled to buy wheat abroad.

Khrushchev's voluntary and hurried experiments did considerable harm to Georgia too. The practice of using pastures for arable land was wrong and unjustified. It caused the diminishing of the livestock and harmed the traditional branch of economy – cattle breeding. As it had been expected, the so-called "maize campaign" failed too. By N.



Khrushchev's "wise" recommendation, this campaign meant digging up vineyards in Kakheti lowlands and growing maize instead.

Collective farmers suffered greatly from being deprived of part of their personal plots. This land was given to collective farms. This new attack on the personal property of the village population made the economic position of peasants much worse. The level of peasant economy became considerably lower. The amount of the produce in this sphere again reached the level of the pre-war period.

The scientific-technical revolution begun in the 1950s was felt in the Soviet Union as well. The atomic energy, chemical industries developed fast. The achievements in the Soviet military-industrial complex were impressive. However, the results in other branches were more moderate. In these spheres, material and human resources were used.

The peaceful development of the Soviet Union caused certain economic progress, a gradual rise of the population's welfare, and significant changes in the social sphere in Georgia too. Housing construction spread widely. Besides the state, it was carried out by housing-construction cooperatives. Such construction began in 1962. Over half a million people improved their living conditions in 1959-1965. Gasification of apartments in Tbilisi and Rustavi created considerable comfort. Georgia received natural gas by the Orjonikidze-Tbilisi pipeline from the Krasnodar Region of the Russian Federation.

The length of the working day was reduced to seven hours in many branches of industry. The salaries and wages of workers and employees increased. The emission of state loan bonds ceased, and compensating the loans of previous years began. Collective farmers were given advances and a monthly guaranteed payment. An improved pension system came in force; payment for all kinds of studies was abolished, etc.

A reform of Soviet money was carried out in 1961. From 1965, collective farmer women were granted a state pension at the age of 60, and men at the age of 65. All this increased the real income of workers to a certain extent, though at the same time prices on foodstuffs and consumers' goods rose. The eradication of the deficit of these products was impossible in the conditions of the Soviet economic policy. In spite of the steps taken by Khrushchev's administration, the living standards of the USSR population were still low and far behind those of the western countries.

N. Khrushchev was unable to realize the reforms started by him fully. The camp that opposed him (L. Brezhnev, M. Suslov, V. Mzhavanadze and others) removed him from his post in October 1964.

Period of "stagnation"

After Khrushchev had "retired on a pension", Leonid Brezhnev became head of the Soviet Empire. His rule lasted until 1982, and later it was called the period of "stagnation".

The development of the state and society demanded the renewal of the political, economic and social system, a new cycle of modernization. Without it, even the ideological principles of the Soviet Empire were in danger. The approaching crisis was caused by the mental changes taking place inside the ruling party alongside other factors.



The cohort of Lenin's contemporary high-principled Bolsheviks was gradually dying out. Instead of the old ones, a new generation of communists appeared in the arena. Unscrupulous leaders, time-servers came forward at both the local, republican and all-Union level. They did not believe in the ideals of the October Revolution or communism. These people did not care for Utopian ideas; they thought more of their careers and personal interests. In this situation, a great majority of the society lost their faith in the honor and authority of the Communist Party. The nihilism felt for the socialist values acquired a mass character.

The new Soviet leader tried to raise the role and authority of the ruling political force – the CPSU. The artificial division of the Party structures according to enterprises was abolished. The party organizations were again built on the territorial principle. The principles of "the democratic centralism" and "iron discipline" were established anew. The CPSU Central Committee Politburo and the post of the General Secretary were re-established. L. Brezhnev was elected General Secretary and made the chairman of the presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet at the same time. A little later, it was found necessary to reflect the prerogative of the Communist Party in the main law of the country.

A special article (Article 6) was entered into the USSR Constitution in 1977 concerning the Communist Party. It was legally defined for the first time that the CPSU is the "leading and ruling force" of the Soviet society, that it is "the nucleus of the political system", and that it exists for people and serves people. The Constitution legalized the factual monopoly of the CPSU and its full political impregnability, but this did not add much to the abased moral face of the party and its diminished authority.

Nikita Khrushchev's promise about building communism in the Soviet Union by the 1980s turned out to be a myth. After it had become clear to everybody, the Soviet political leadership found it necessary to introduce changes into the sphere of ideology as well. A point of view was worked out that before reaching communism it was necessary to pass another stage: "developed socialism". The doctrine of "developed socialism" as an important "find" of the "Marxist-Leninist teaching" was reflected in the preamble of the new Soviet constitution.

The situation was not improved by re-establishing "the collective style of leadership" either, when the party apparatus controlled everybody and everything, but made others responsible for things, viz. state, Soviet or economic bodies.

In 1965, economic reforms in the country started supervised by N. Kosigin, Chairman of the Soviet of Ministers. Their essence was introducing progressive elements of market economy (economic accounts, the mechanism of internal self-regulation, interesting the producer in the labor results and quality) into the planned economy of the Empire.

The reform was carried out in agriculture as well. The state wrote off the debts of collective and Soviet farms once more. The State raised the purchase prices on agricultural produce and increased investments in the agrarian sector. Programs for the complex mechanization of the agricultural production, land-reclamation, chemical engineering, etc. were begun. These measures had positive results, but their effect was short-lived.

The reforms, the growing mobilization of the people's material or financial resources, and their rational utilization would have succeeded only if alongside the economic liberalization the process of political democratization had developed in the country. However, this did not happen. It was also essential that the principles of socialist economics had not



changed either – the principles of property and production had remained the same, and this hindered the generation of material interest, the increase of labor productivity, the significant improvement of the quality of the production, etc.

The Empire's priority in economics was still heavy industry, producing military weapons and equipment, and space flight. Billions of roubles were spent on it. The Soviet Union sold a considerable part of its military arsenal abroad and made a handsome profit by it. The income in currency was mainly provided by the intense export of gas, gold, diamonds, etc. The figures were impressive, but the budget resources were not fully used to satisfy the demands of the population. Quite a considerable part of the budget was spent on increasing the influence of the Soviet State in various countries, on forming communist parties there and supporting them financially.

Georgia also did her share in this "international obligation". A considerable part of Georgia's industrial and agricultural production (electric locomotives, airplanes, submarines, steel, ferroalloy, precision instruments, machine tools, wine, tea, subtropical plants, etc.) had a large market, embracing the whole Soviet Union and some countries abroad, but the income usually filled the all-Union budget. Factories, plants and collective farms got only a little part of the pay for their production. Georgia's budget was still part of the Empire's budget and the leaders of the Republic could not only draw a budget, but they could not even enter slight corrections into it without the permission of the all-Union State Planning Committee (Gosplan).

Despite the above-mentioned reality, "Kosigin's reforms" resulted in considerable changes in Georgia's economy too. The development of machine building, metalworking industry, electro-technical, tractor-producing industries and some other branches was somewhat sped up. In 1965-1970 the Tbilisi electronic computing machine plant, Kutaisi small tractor plant, the Rustavi steel and cast iron foundry and nitric fertilizer factory, the Borjomi bottling factory, Surami glass foundries, tea factories, etc. were added to Georgia's industrial enterprises. The tempo of industrial construction in Georgia outstripped the preparation of the local skilled personnel whose deficit was quite often filled by bringing a non-Georgian element from Russia and other republics. Many industrial enterprises almost completely used the raw materials brought from other republics.

Raising the level of land-reclamation, mechanization and automation in agriculture was paid more attention to. More attention was also paid to supplying collective and Soviet farms with agricultural machines and mineral fertilizers. Tea and citrus plantations became larger, etc.

Many resorts were built. The Pitsunda resort complex, the Borjomi, and Gagra holiday hotels, rest homes, and new cultural and service centers were established.

The lowest salaries of workers and employees were raised, vacations were extended, the income tax and other taxes were somewhat reduced. Instead of working six days a week workers and employees began to work five days a week. The state provided free education, free medical aid, pensions, students' grants, social aid and privileges. The State together with trade unions apportioned sources for free or preferential accommodations in sanatoria or rest homes. Care for mothers with many children, disabled persons, labor and war veterans became more intense.

Alongside this, the deficit of consumers' goods was felt more and more in the country. The amount of these goods did not satisfy the tastes and demands of the population. Insufficiency of consumer goods made people save money. Individual deposits increased



in savings banks considerably. While in 1960 760,000 people had personal deposits, in 1970 this number reached 1,146,000.

The years of Leonid Brezhnev's rule were one of the most peaceful periods in the history of the USSR. The totalitarian system had lost its previous severity. The period of mass repressions and concentration camps became part of the past. Nobody opposed the regime in an organized way inside the country. The majority of the population understood the situation, and it can be said that they "adjusted themselves to life". The government personnel and officials turned out to be more adroit in this respect. They used their position very cleverly. A long wished for time came for the Soviet *nomenklatura*.

The bureaucratic party and Soviet State machinery began to form the elite of society. Herewith, in its upper and lower echelons self-interest, avarice, protectionism and other negative phenomena created by the Soviet system began to flourish.

Almost nobody followed the officially established rules or norm of life. The ordinary State official or a high party functionary both took bribes. Corruption reigned in all groups of the government. Everything cost money: secondary school-leaving certificate and medals, enrolling in the higher educational institution, joining the Communist Party or finding employment. One could become a hero of socialist labor, a secretary of the district committee, a minister, or even a member of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo if one paid money.

It was not allowed, but still a doctor turned to private practice, a teacher and lecturer gave private lessons, an engineer supplemented his scanty salary by selling building materials from a State firm. The peasant took part of the fertilizers and chemical weed and pest killers allotted to the collective farm plot to his own orchard or vegetable-garden, a worker managed to take away "unnoticed" a part of a mechanism or a finished product. Hard to find goods were sold from under counter at speculative prices. The workers whose duty was to observe law pretended not to notice all this and profited by the situation. The shares of profit were divided in the local, republican or all-Union structures and a large vicious circle was created throughout the country.

Of course, there were honest people among the leaders of the government and the rank-and-file members of the society too. These people followed a traditional moral and ethical way of life, but they did not change this situation overall.

These negative, anti-social phenomena were characteristic of the whole Empire, but the link broke in Georgia. It was not a fortuitous event and was not caused only by the above-mentioned defects.

After the events of March 9, 1956, the Kremlin always had "its man" in Georgia's Communist party leadership. As a rule, the second secretary of Georgia's Communist Party was a functionary of the Russian nationality, sent from Moscow. His duty was to control everything, in general, but he was to pay a special attention to the general feeling of the society and the dynamics of national aspirations.

From the second half of the 1960s national patriotic themes were noticed in the works of Georgian intelligentsia.

This did not suit the official ideology at all. National motif became stronger in the Georgian literature, theater and cinema art. Harsh criticism of the system began to sound. A certain danger was felt in the Center and a decision was made.

In February 1972, the CPSU Central Committee adopted a special resolution about the work of Tbilisi city party committee. The document concerned the faults and



shortcomings revealed in the work of the party leaders of the capital, but the Kremlin criticized the entire Communist organization of Georgia. The defects in the ideological work were specially emphasized in the document, also the weakening of "socialist discipline", lagging behind in bringing up the youth in the spirit of internationalism, etc.

Soon Vasil Mzhavanadze, the first secretary of the Central Committee of Georgia's Communist Party, was dismissed from his post. In September 1972, a young general of militia, Eduard Shevardnadze, was elected instead of him. The latter had made a significant Komsomol and Party career. The chairman of the Soviet of Ministers was changed too. This post was taken by Zurab Pataridze. New leaders were appointed in Georgia's regions and towns in a short time.

Eduard Shevardnadze had several tasks to carry out. In the first place, he was to assure the Center of Georgia's loyalty and faithfulness. He was to restore the shaken authority of the Communist Party and create the impression that no danger threatened the socialist way of life and Soviet ideals in Georgia. He was to manage all this without opposing Georgia's population, in the first place the Georgian intelligentsia, and to receive their support.

The aim of the measures carried out on Ed. Shevardnadze's initiative, was to perpetuate a stereotype among the Georgian society of the inseparable friendship of the Russian and Georgian peoples, of Russia's special role in the history of Georgia. A point of view appeared that there was no alternative for the Georgian people politically but Russia.

To win the hearts of Moscow bosses the Central Committee of Georgia's Communist Party adopted a resolution in 1973 to improve teaching the Russian language at the educational institutions of the Republic. Ed. Shevardnadze personally tried to restore the point of view expressed as early as at the end of the eighteenth century that "the sun rises from the North in Georgia". Georgia's party elite did their best to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Georgievsk treaty, which was not the event to be celebrated at all.

In 1972, Georgia's new party leader started an "uncompromising fight" to strengthen the state and labor discipline with the purpose of eradicating corruption, protectionism, private property tendencies, and harmful traditions. An attack upon the shadow economy began. The rector of Tbilisi State Medical Institute was arrested, chairman of the executive committee of the deputies' Soviet of one of the regions was shot, and the lavish country houses of high-ranking state officials in the village of Tskhvarichamia were confiscated for breaking the socialist law, taking bribes, and taking advantage of their posts. This noisy propaganda campaign was unable to make the Soviet system healthier or nobler.

In return for "being implacable to these faults" Ed. Shevardnadze was trusted by the Kremlin leaders, he made a name for himself of an irreconcilable fighter against lawlessness. In 1978, he was elected candidate for the membership of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo, a little later, he was awarded a title of the hero of socialist labor. In 1985, he was elected member of the Politburo and made minister of foreign affairs of the USSR.

Eduard Shevardnadze's particular loyalty, to Moscow, whether feigned or real, his exaggerated obsequiousness to L. Brezhnev personally, had a certain influence on the relations of the center of the Empire and Georgia. Every year Georgia was awarded the challenge banner of the winner of the socialist emulation. The transfer from the city budget was increased to some extent; some significant investment projects were carried



out. Considerable assignments were made in the spheres of higher education, science, culture, etc.

The quantitative increase of Georgia's industrial potential was notable, in the autonomous areas of Abkhazia, Ajara and South Ossetia among them. In addition, the industrial output and the national income grew. The production in the spheres of electric energy, machine-building, ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, chemical and building materials was enlarged. The Madneuli mining-ore concentrating group of enterprises, textile, clothes, and food factories began to work; the Bzyb meat and milk group of enterprises was opened. The Enguri hydropower station started working. The construction of the Vartsikhe, the Zhinvali and other hydropower stations began, etc.

Georgia's transport and communication developed. Automobile roads were improved; the capacity of the railway transport and the goods turnover grew. The civil aviation was enlarged. New airlines were opened, etc.

Herewith, the tempo of the modernization of factories and plants, the reconstruction of enterprises and the process of their technical renovation was slow and insufficient. The level of labor mechanization was low, and the same can be said about the introduction of new technologies. The existing capacities were not fully utilized. Extravagance and a bureaucratic attitude to work were felt. The result was that the invested funds did not bring in the respective profit.

Certain success was achieved in the development of agriculture. The area of tea, vineyards, citruses, cereals, and technical plants became larger, and their crops per hectare increased. The technical base grew stronger. Cattle breeding farms and complexes were built. The number of unprofitable farms decreased, but about a thousand collective and soviet farms were still unprofitable.

The compensation of a day's work on a collective farm did not even reach five roubles. People avoided collective farms and left their villages. By the beginning of the 1980s, Georgia's village population had diminished from 52 percent to 49 percent. The population of the capital had increased at the expense of the villages. By 1980, a million people already lived in Tbilisi.

From the middle of the 1970s, as they used to say at that time, "the enthusiasm and labor activity of masses" became particularly high. Labor organizations took increased obligations on the instruction of the Party bodies, took various initiatives, etc. Georgia "overfulfilled" her five-year plans. According to the statistical data, the country obtained the image of an advanced and successful republic. However, this was only an outward appearance. The figures did not express reality. Many unsolved problems, difficulties and defects were hidden behind them. In the majority of cases, the plans were fulfilled by means of adding false data and machination. Being carried away by quantity, the producers forgot to think about quality, and the results were deplorable.

The authorities of the Republic made innovations within their competence and searched for rational forms and methods to manage the people's economy. The well-known "Abasha experiment" was carried out. Its aim was to interest peasants in the results and quality of products. The experiment, started in Poti, was also noteworthy: a territorial-branch body of self-government was established, and the enterprises that were in the town were ordered to take part in the development of the local enterprises.

The fight aimed at the eradication of corruption among the population started by Eduard Shevardnadze when he was appointed, had the character of a campaign and gradually



fizzled out. Many negative phenomena were not eradicated. It was impossible to overcome hypocrisy, spuriousness, bribery, protectionism, etc. in one republic. These vices were spread throughout the whole Empire.

The situation did not change much after the death of L. Brezhnev either. The rule of Brezhnev's "heirs" – Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko lasted about two and a half years (November of 1982 – March 1985). It was added to the period of "stagnation."

Andropov intended to strengthen the Soviet system by replacing corrupt personnel with officials who were proof against corruption and by making the labor discipline more severe. Carrying out economic reforms was planned too, but the General Secretary's health failed him and he died in February 1984. His successor, K. Chernenko, was so old and suffering from ill health that he was unable to do anything and died, leaving no traces of his work.

Georgia at the last stage of the Soviet system. "Reorganization" (Perestroika) and its results

The Soviet Empire in the last decade of its rule found itself in an acute crisis. It was obvious that the socialist order had exhausted all possibilities of development. The catastrophe was inevitable. However, "the Evil Empire", as Ronald Reagan called it, continued its existence. In such a situation a comparatively young leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, was elected general secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU in March 1985. Gorbachev, with the help of the persons, having identical ideas (these were Aleksandr Yakovlev, Eduard Shevardnadze and others), intended to reanimate the political regime by the so-called course of reorganization (*perestroika*).

The main idea of the reorganization was to modernize the party and state by means of reforms, adapting the Soviet Union to modern realities and problems. The main task was to stop the disintegration of the socialist system and to maintain the interests of the ruling elite, the *nomenklatura*. It was announced that it was possible to save socialism by restoring its humane character, by introducing the principles of democratization and transparency (*glasnost*) into social life. All this was to be carried out in the regime of "speeding up".

The "democratization" meant moving towards democracy without defining the concrete date of reaching the aim. As for the slogan of speeding up, it was connected with the promise that in a very short time economics and the people's standard of living would rise considerably. The objective of "transparency" was wide freedom of speech.

Of these three main principles of reorganization, it was transparency that bore more practical fruit. Speeding up remained another propagandist promise; as to democratization, it was more of a formal than of real character until the last years of the Soviet system.

The results of transparency became obvious very soon. The censorship weakened, new newspapers and magazines were established, and live broadcasts were allowed on television. The information media did not conceal the existing situation in the country and showed the true picture of what was going on. The previously forbidden literature was published, "Special depositories" in libraries were annulled, many taboo themes became open, the names of many unjustly punished people could be mentioned, etc.



The policy of reorganization was reflected in the foreign policy of the USSR. The Soviet Army withdrew from Afghanistan in 1987, ending that shameful war, the war that had resulted in numerous casualties and on which enormous sums of money had been spent. In 1989-1990, communist regimes were peacefully abolished in the socialist countries of Europe (everywhere except Rumania) and national and democratic forces came into power. Having escaped the Soviet ascendancy, these countries started on the way of Euro-Atlantic integration.

Pulling down the Berlin Wall and the unification of Germany was an important event. The same can be said about the liquidation of the Warsaw Pact, the disintegration of the socialist camp and the end of the Cold War that laid a foundation for the new world order. The Georgian people looked at the processes taking place in the international arena and in the Soviet Empire with optimism. Great was the desire and expectation of renovation, but the first years of reorganization did not bring an essential change in Georgia's social-economic or social-political life. Eduard Shevardnadze, having been moved to Moscow and made minister of foreign affairs, Jumber Patiashvili was appointed head of Georgia's Communist Party. Patiashvili was an experienced cadre, loyal to communist principles. However, he was not considered to be Shevardnadze's direct "successor". This circumstance made him act cautiously and avoid bold initiatives. Georgia's party organization continued to carry out the instructions coming from the Kremlin as willingly as before.

The process of reorganization in the whole Empire was marked by two campaigns. The first one was a fight against alcoholism and the other was the measures taken against "dishonestly earned incomes". The decree about limiting the production of alcoholic drinks and using them aimed at liquidating drunkenness. The latter as a disease had never been a problem for Georgians, but Georgia was compelled to obey all-Union resolutions. The production of wine and other alcoholic drinks was reduced. Making vodka in home conditions was prohibited. The latter was part of Georgia's economic culture and one of the sources of the income of a family in the village. The Kakhetian vinegrowers faced the danger of uprooting their vineyards. This decree did considerable harm to the viticulture and winemaking of the Republic.

The attack upon "dishonestly earned incomes" should have concerned the party bosses in the first place. They did not create anything, but were easily able to appropriate common property illegally. Instead of this, the layer of society was attacked that grew crops on their personal plots and sold the surplus products in the market. As for the "shady economics" it was still flourishing, for it was monopolized by the party and Soviet *nomenclatura*, the high-ranking officials of the militia and the businessmen who had become rich, being protected by them.

The *nomenclatura* also profited by such reforms in the economic sphere as were the permissions of giving lands on a long-term lease, the law on cooperation and individual labor activities, the freedom of establishing joint enterprises with foreign firms and companies, etc.

Against this background the CPSU, called "the brain, honor, and conscience" of the epoch experienced an ideological failure. There was almost nobody who believed in communist dogmas, although a great number of people still coveted the red membership card of the party. Being a member of the party was a foundation of the career in any



branch. Only the membership of the communist party enabled a person to penetrate into the elite of this or that social stratum that at the same time guaranteed a well-to-do existence. By the middle period of the 1980s, Georgia's Communist Party had 400,000 members. This figure equaled 8 percent of the whole population of the Republic. The absolute majority of communists were rank-and-file mortals, but almost all well-known and eminent persons of society were also communist party members-these were writers, scientists, producers, film-directors, actors and actresses, etc. There were few exceptions. This circumstance made it obvious that not only the working class and peasantry, considered to be the mainstay of the Soviet system, adjusted themselves to it, but the vanguard of the intelligentsia as well – thousands of representatives of education, science, culture, and art who obtained more possibilities for their creative work, more social privileges and prestige in return for conformity.

The conformist mood prevailed in a great part of the Georgian society as well. It was not the consequence of repressions alone, the usual fear of the authoritarian regime. A certain social balance, created in the Soviet Union, caused the loyal attitude and conformity with Soviet power. Free education and medical aid, available for everybody, the possibility of finding employment, having a guaranteed pension, getting an apartment and other rights did not arouse the people's wish to oppose the Soviet system.

Nevertheless, as soon as the freedom of speech and ideas were allowed, the situation changed immediately. All the above-mentioned positive sides of life, achieved by the hard work of the peoples living in the USSR in peace were unable to stop the anger of these peoples caused by the injustice, reigning in the national question, which remained hidden up to that time.

From 1987, the establishing and working of informal societies began to spread widely in Georgia. Numerous societies, unions, groups and parties of political character sprang up. Among them Ilya Chavchavadze Society, People's Front, Shota Rustaveli Society, the Party of National Independence, etc. The students became active too.

The newly founded organizations put forward the protection of national values. Demonstrations were organized against calling Georgian youth up for the military service in the Soviet Army. It was a strong protest against the discrimination, torture and murder of the Georgian youth, widely spread in the Soviet Army of those days.

There was another important demand that the military firing range should be taken away from the territory of David Gareja Monastery Complex because it damaged this unique monument of the Georgian cultural heritage and represented danger to it. A significant part of students and intelligentsia opposed the construction of a railway line through the Caucasian pass and other gigantic projects threatening with ecological disasters (Khudon electric hydropower station, constructing an atomic power station in Kakheti or in Gali region, etc.).

The informal organizations raised a question of land-tenure and violations of law in this sphere; they discussed the discrimination of the Georgian population and the violation of Georgia's national interests in autonomous regions (Abkhazia, South Ossetia).

The authorities of the Republic reacted differently to these challenges – sometimes they ordered to raid the peaceful protest meeting, at other times they preferred to make some concessions. For instance, an example of such concessions was restoring the old



names of Georgian towns (Senaki instead of Tskhakaya, Kharagauli instead of Orjonikidze, etc.). These towns had been given the names of revolutionary Bolsheviks.

The central authorities of the Empire also had to make some concessions, but they did not give up the main thing. They would not free "the Union republics" where the liberation movement became more and more radical. The Empire could oppose this movement with nothing but military force, and this could not go on for a long time.

The situation became extremely complicated in the Caucasus and Central Asia. These were conflicts of ethnic character, mainly inspired by the centre. The consequences of these events were tragic. An armed conflict started between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1988 for the mountainous Karabakh region. In the following year bloody clashes on national grounds occurred in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Separatist feelings developed in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and the Autonomous District of South Ossetia, etc.

The reorganization process, instead of the further consolidation of "the brotherly family", caused its disintegration. M. Gorbachev's inconsistent economic reforms were unable to ensure the development of the Soviet production. On the contrary, the growth of the economy slowed down, labor productivity diminished; a crisis began to reign in the consumers' market, inflation developed, etc. The country was so exhausted that in 1990 the USSR asked the advanced countries of the world for a loan and financial help. The reanimation of the socialist order and system turned out to have no prospects from the political point of view as well. The satellite countries of Central and Eastern Europe left the Warsaw Pact one after another. Alongside these harmful changes, an internal political crisis caused by the development of national movements in non-Russian republics, was also noticeable. It undermined the foundation of the last empire of the world and accelerated its disintegration.

The National Movement Gains Strength

The dissident movement

The USSR population was isolated from the outer world by an "iron curtain". Even by the 1970s, the communist system remained "a closed society". However, the democratization processes, going on in the world at that time, exerted a certain influence on the international life and the foreign policy of the Soviet Empire.

In 1973-1975 an international forum of the representatives of European countries, and of the USA and Canada, called "the Conference of the European Security and Cooperation" was established.

The leaders of 33 European member states, the USA, and Canada adopted "a conclusive act" in Helsinki in the summer of 1975 in which ten main principles are formulated. Among them: sovereign equality, using no violence, inviolability of frontiers, the territorial integrity of states, non-interference in internal affairs, respecting human rights and main liberties, the right of peoples' equality of rights and deciding one's own fate, etc. The Soviet leader L. Brezhnev also signed the conclusive act of Helsinki conference. This



circumstance created a new opportunity for the western countries of controlling the obligations taken by the Soviet Union, especially in the sphere of protecting human rights.

Alongside this process, formation of organization, protecting human rights was going on in Russia, in the Ukraine, in the Baltic countries, in Georgia, etc. Groups of the so-called dissenters sprang up. The latter laid the foundation for the dissident movement.

The dissident movement was a peaceful form of opposing the authoritarian regime. It aspired to the democratization of the existing system and did not aim at the inevitable overthrowing the Soviet order. The dissidents exposed and criticized the vices of the Communist government, collected the facts, compromising the Soviet reality, and sent this material to foreign mass media, spread leaflets and anti-Soviet literature, published the so called self-publications – handwritten journals, booklets, etc.

The first society of dissidents, holding the same views, appeared in Georgia as early as 1974. It was “the Initiative Group of Protecting Human Rights”. Its members were Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Merab Kostava, Givi Magularia, Teimuraz Janelidze and others. In 1976, they founded “Georgia’s Helsinki Group” which later on was called the “Helsinki Union”. Zviad Gamsakhurdia headed both the Group and the Union. In 1975, the organization began to publish illegal journals “*Okros Satsmisi*” (“Golden Fleece”) “*Sakartvelo*” (“Georgia”), “*Sakartvelos Moambe*” (“Georgia’s Herald”), “*Mematiane*” (“The Chronicler”). Articles of patriotic character, articles dedicated to the rights of the Georgian nation, Georgia’s Orthodox Church, protecting the Georgian monuments of culture and other materials were published in these journals.

In 1977, Zviad Gamsakhurdia was expelled from the Writers’ Union of Georgia and arrested for taking part in dissident activities. The same year Merab Kostava was arrested too and exiled to Siberia.

The links connecting the representatives of the dissident movement in the Soviet Empire were respect for democratic values, irreconcilability with violence, lies and injustice, and primarily the acknowledgement and protection of human rights. The activities of Russian dissidents (Academician A. Sakharov, writer A. Solzhenitsin, musician M. Rostropovitch and others) were mainly limited to protecting human rights. A great-power idea and an imperial ambition were not alien to them, and this was against the national aspirations reigning in the dissident groups of non-Russian republics. Unlike Russia, in Georgia both human and the nation’s rights were to be protected. National ideals, fight against Russification, protecting cultural heritage, strengthening Christian faith, ecological security, etc. were the main questions, raised by the Georgian dissidents. It was not fortuitous that in the years of “*perestroika*”, especially after A. Sakharov had called Georgia a “small empire”. The ways of the Russian and Georgian dissidents parted for good.

The forms of fighting of the dissident movement were common and similar in the whole Soviet Union. Petitions were sent to international organizations, open letters to the governmental bodies, exposing articles were published in illegal journals, etc. And the government also fought against dissidents in different parts of the Empire with similar methods, declared them to be mistaken, lost people, imprisoned them, “treated” them in psychiatric hospitals, expelled them from the USSR. Framed criminal cases against dissidents were widely used. They were mainly accused of hooliganism and resisting the militia. With the purpose of undermining the dissident movement, the Soviet Security

Services sent agents to these organizations and tried to compromise their prominent representatives.

Only a small part of society knew the dissidents. The necessity of conspiracy and permanent watching and persecution on the part of the security bodies compelled these people to carry their activities within the narrow circle of the most faithful persons. Neither were the copies of self-published editions numerous, though their influence on a certain part of students was obvious. The youth started to wake up from political apathy.

The dissident movement was solidly supported by foreign countries. Z. Gamsakhurdia and M. Kostava were elected members of the international organization protecting human rights. Both of them alongside other famous Soviet dissidents were nominated for the Nobel Prize in 1976.

In Russia the dissident movements ended very soon after "publicity and reorganization" (*glasnost* and *perestroika*) began. In Georgia, it merged into the national-liberation movement and became one of its directing nuclei.

Strengthening of national aspirations

The national-liberation movement in Georgia was caused by several factors. The main one among them was the absence of her statehood. The Georgian people did not reconcile with the Bolshevik occupation of their country, the establishment of the Soviet totalitarian system, its violence and dictate. Opposing the Communist regime with arms after the defeat of the 1924 insurrection was senseless. The fight for freedom took a peaceful form.

To restore Georgian statehood it was necessary to take care of retaining the national originality, of national consolidation, of the development of the Georgian culture, science and education, of peaceful construction as it had been done from the 1860s.

All anti-soviet parties and groups having almost completely been exterminated in Georgia, writers, scientists, representatives of national-patriotic intelligentsia became leaders of the liberation movement. The political emigration abroad also did their best to restore the independence of their motherland. However, their influence on the Georgian reality after World War 2 became considerably weaker.

Georgian poetry, belles-lettres, the humanities, cinema, theater, sport which flourished in the 1960s and 1970s served to raise the national consciousness of the Georgian society. The role and authority of the head of the Georgian church, the spiritual leader of the nation, Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II among the population became more and more noticeable. In spite of the prohibition on the part of the party and komsomol bodies, wide ideological propaganda and various atheistic campaigns, a considerable part of the youth began to go to church and many students and schoolchildren helped in churches during the service, joined the parish of various churches, etc. Religion gradually began to occupy its proper place.

Faith in Marxist ideology and its values was shaken among the wide masses of the population, even among the members of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League. This strengthened the national movement. Georgian broadcasts of the radios "Liberty" and "The Voice of America", the radio stations from abroad, which were specially

jammed by certain services, had also their own effect, as the information still reached those who were interested in it. The society took a great interest in critical ideas.

The keen interest and the revival of the national consciousness of the Georgian society were caused by the events connected with the discussion and adoption of Georgia's constitution in the spring of 1978. The article, existing in Georgia's constitution since 1922, that said that the Georgian language was the state language of the republic, was removed from this document, prepared in Moscow.

It is true that the constitution did not have a real force in the Soviet system, but the priority of the Georgian language in the republic was acknowledged formally. Herewith, the above-mentioned article was important because it made it possible to oppose the Kremlin's Russification policy legally. Giving it up would create an extra threat to Georgian uniqueness. It was all the more dangerous because the absurd tendency of removing the language barrier in the Soviet Union, of the merging of nations and forming "the new historic unity" – "the Soviet people" became particularly strong. The formation of the "Soviet people" factually meant the hegemony of the Russian ethos, the assimilation of the nations living in the Empire, the loss of their identity and their Russification.

Georgian students, the patriotic part of the Georgian intelligentsia were the first to rally to protect the language and to retain its status as a state language. The well-known critic and publicist Akaki Bakradze, the representatives of the Georgian literature, professors played an important part in mobilizing the protest. A powerful demonstration of students, whose epicenter was Tbilisi University, was being prepared in Tbilisi.

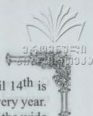
The first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia – Ed. Shevardnadze came to the university and appealed to its administration, professors, teachers and students to be careful; he reminded them about the tragic 9th of March of 1956 and advised them to refrain from going out into the streets.

On April 14, 1978, a session of Georgia's Supreme Soviet was held to ratify the constitution. The students began to get together in the university garden and thousands of students started towards the House of Government. Students of higher educational institutions, technical schools, secondary schools took part in the demonstration. Slogans for protecting the Georgian language united the representatives of almost all the layers of society. A great majority of the population of the capital joined the participants of the demonstration. The young people organized a sit-down strike in Rustaveli Avenue.

The events occurring in Georgia were not unnoticed by the highest authorities in the Kremlin. The Centre took the necessary measures. The Tbilisi garrison was mobilized. The latter obeyed only Moscow. The military forces filled the streets adjacent to the House of Government with armored vehicles. The risk was great. The situation was dangerous.

The demonstrators had no intention of retreating. They declared that they would give up their lives for protecting the right of their language. Eduard Shevardnadze specially rang up the Politburo and explained how serious the situation was. Moscow decided to give in this time. The Georgian language retained the status of the state language and it was put down in Georgia's constitution.

This achievement of the Georgian people was of special importance. It became evident that the national spirit was still alive and it became stronger. The patriotic forces became sure of their ability. The liberation movement gained strength. A little later, a monument to



the "mother tongue" was erected in one of the public gardens of Tbilisi. April 14th is acknowledged the day of protecting the Georgian language and is celebrated every year.

Georgian writers' patriotic works were the source of national aspirations for the wide layers of society, the younger generation in the first place. "1832", a cycle of poems by Mukhran Machavariani, was passed from hand to hand. Society read avidly Akaki Bakradze's critical publications and attended his public lectures. People admired the new films of a documentary film director Rezo Tabukashvili that reflected national honor, ideals of humanism. "Folklore evenings" arranged by Vakhushti Kotetishvili, were charged with national energy, etc.

Some representatives of the Georgian intelligentsia expressed their protest against the existing regime by leaving the country and going abroad. The actor Nugzar Sharia, conductor Vakhtang Zhordania, pianist Lekso Toradze left the country at different times.

The failed attempt of a group of young people to hijack an airline in 1983 to fly abroad elicited a strong response. The pilots returned the plane to the Tbilisi airport. The negotiations with the hijackers were of no avail. Special detachments of militia took the liner by storm. There were casualties. The hijackers were sentenced to death by shooting. The appeal of representatives of the Georgian intelligentsia to sentence them to a milder punishment was rejected. They were shot as soon as the trial was over. The same fate befell a priest who had not been among the hijackers but was accused of being their ideological leader; he was also sentenced to death.

At the boundary of the 1970s and 1980s, the formation of illegal political organizations began in Georgia. A Republican Party was founded in 1978, and in 1981, a small group of persons holding the same views, restored the National Democratic Party underground. The activities of these organizations at that time were limited to preparing and spreading leaflets.

In 1983, the members of the main committee of the National-Democratic Party intended to organize an anti-government demonstration as a protest against celebrating a jubilee of the Georgievsk Treaty. The militia and the security services arrested the organizers of the action. One of them was exiled and two were punished by being sent to serve in the army.

A forerunner of national awakening was an important event of bringing the remains of a well known Georgian scholar and theologian Mikheil Tamarashvili from Italy. People carried the precious coffin from the Museum of Arts to Didube Pantheon by hand. The procession moved along the central avenue of the city. The burial of the famous scholar and public figure Pavle Ingorokva also turned into a mass demonstration of society in November 1983.

The feature film "Repentance", made by a well-known film-director Tengiz Abuladze, played an important part in reviving the feeling of protest against the imperial violence and dictate. It is true that this masterpiece of cinema art was shot with the assistance of Georgia's party leader Ed. Shevardnadze, but it was shelved for quite a long time. It was spread among people by means of illegally prepared videocassettes.

A certain liberalization allowed in the USSR since 1985, expressed in the policy of "reorganization" (*perestroika*), gave a fresh stimulus to strengthening the national movement. The Georgian society reacted more strongly to attacks offending national dignity. For instance, the work of a popular Russian writer V. Astafyev - "Catching



Gudgeons in Georgia", in which the ways of Georgian life and traditions were ridiculed, triggered an extremely negative reaction. Due to some anti-Georgian acts, the Georgian writers, as a sign of protest, demonstratively left the meeting of the congress of the Soviet writers, held in Moscow in the summer of 1986.

In 1987, Georgia's orthodox Christian church officially declared the great Georgian writer, thinker, and public figure Ilia Chavchavadze a saint. In Communist reality, it was the first canonization of a public figure. Society approved the decision of the church.

In the following years, newly formed political organizations strongly influenced social processes. Owing to the fact that they were not officially registered, they were called informal organizations. Several organizations of this type came forward. They assumed the role of leaders of the national movement. These were Georgia's Helsinki Union (Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Merab Kostava), Georgia's National Democratic Party (Giorgi Chanturia), the National Independence Party (Irakli Tsereteli), the Ilia Chavchavadze Society (Tamar Chkeidze, Zurab Chavchavadze), etc.

Georgia's People's Front (Nodar Natadze) formed a mass organization. It united members of intelligentsia and was moderately democratic. There was another moderate democratic organization – the Shota Rustaveli Society (Akaki Bakradze). It consisted of members of the creative intelligentsia, of party members, and Soviet functionaries with national interests. In spite of the fact that the Communist Government founded it, it gained a high authority, but its activities were more of a patriotic, cultural, and social character, than a political one.

The moderate organizations of a social-political character did not become standard-bearers of the national movement, for this banner was already in the hands of another radical wing of this movement.

The 70th anniversary of the restoration of Georgia's statehood and the establishment of the Democratic Republic was celebrated by a mass demonstration in Tbilisi on May 26, 1988. The main among the slogans was the demand of national sovereignty, which soon became the chief motto of the national movement.

The leaders of the Republic could hardly reconcile with the strengthening of the national movement. It was difficult for them to communicate and find a common language with its representatives. A law about prohibiting the unsanctioned meetings and demonstrations was published in July 1988. The security forces were allowed to raid meetings that were not sanctioned and to disperse their participants by force. The militia did it several times, raiding meetings in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, and other places. This circumstance deepened the confrontation between the ruling regime and society.

The autumn of 1988 was especially troublous. It was distinguished by stormy meetings, demonstrations, and hunger strikes. The latter was a new form of struggle in the Georgian reality, and had a great psychological effect on the society.

The events begun in Tbilisi in November of 1988 were particularly large-scale. They began to rage against a resolution, adopted by the Kremlin for retaining the unity of the Empire and which considerably limited the right of the so-called Union republics of leaving the Soviet Union.

The question was opposed by other republics as well. The center of the Empire decided to make a concession this time, but did not give up its insidious plans.

The Tragedy of 9 April, 1989

The strengthening of the national movements created serious danger for the integrity of the Empire. The Kremlin was not going to reconcile with it. It could hardly put up with the weakening of its positions and turned to various methods to save itself. One of these methods was the punishment of recalcitrant republics by causing disturbances inside them. The central government of the Empire set Georgia's autonomous elements up against it and opposed aggressive separatism in Abkhazia and South Ossetia against the Georgian nation's fight for freedom. Moscow had prepared conditions for such a situation beforehand. In the first years of sovietization "delayed-action bombs" were placed in the country by dividing the territory of Georgia into autonomous units, and now the time of putting them into action had come.

On March 18, 1989, Abkhazians' numerous meetings at the village of Likhni in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia requested that the high authorities of the USSR separate Abkhazia from Georgia. The authors of the request substantiated this by the falsification of history. They asserted that nothing connected Abkhazia with Georgia and that the Abkhazian nation was oppressed by the Georgians both in the old times and at that time too, therefore their living together was impossible, etc. Later on, it was discovered that such a document in the form of an Abkhazian letter had existed before and the Abkhazians had sent it to the 19th conference of the CPSU as early as in June 1988. This circumstance makes it clear that the ground for kindling a separatism movement in this region had been prepared.

The Likhni anti-Georgian act was condemned by the Georgian population of Abkhazia. In Tbilisi, representatives of intelligentsia got together and requested of the authorities of the Republic to properly react on the fact, but the reaction was delayed.

On April 4, 1989, a stormy demonstration began in Tbilisi, initiated by the Ilia Chavchavadze Society. The meeting opposite the House of Government, which became permanent, opposed the Abkhazian separatism at first, but after April 6 turned to the demand of Georgia's national independence. In spite of this, the meeting was peaceful. Every day people from various regions of Georgia joined it. Besides the student youth, there were a great number of representatives of intelligentsia, well-known scientists, writers, artists, film-directors, producers, actors and actresses, etc.

The meeting lasted five days and nights. A large group of young people went on hunger strike. Rustaveli Avenue was closed. People went on strike.

The leaders of the republic tried to prevent aggravating the situation. At the request of the initiative group of intelligentsia, they agreed to have a dialogue with the organizers of the meeting, but the latter did not agree to the proposal. The first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, Jumber Patiashvili, addressed the participants of the demonstration and the population of the country on television and radio asking them to be calm and moderate, but with no result.

The size and character of the movement alarmed the authorities of the Republic. Special measures were taken to normalize the situation. On the instruction of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU, additional detachments of internal troops and the Soviet Army were brought to Georgia.

On April 8, Georgia's Communist Party approved a resolution to suppress the meeting by military force. On the very same day, a tank passed along the central streets of the city, and helicopters appeared in Tbilisi sky. These events were followed by an opposite effect. The number of the participants of the meeting increased significantly.

General I. Rodionov, the commander of the Transcaucasian military district, was ordered to repress the meeting.

On the night of the eighth and ninth of April there were about ten thousand people in front of the Government House. Another meeting was held at the television building. The danger that the demonstrators would be raided was real, but nobody felt any fear. A little time before the tragedy Georgia's Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II came to the Government House. To avoid danger, the Patriarch advised the people to move to the Kashveti Church on the opposite side of the street and to pray there. The leaders of the meeting did not follow the spiritual teacher's advice.

At daybreak, troops specially brought to Tbilisi besieged the demonstrators. They were officially ordered to disperse the participants of the meeting and clear out the space in front of the Government House, but the soldiers began killing people in cold blood. They attacked the peaceful participants of the meeting with trench spades and poisonous gas. Sixteen people were killed and thousands of people were wounded and poisoned during this ruthless squaring of accounts. The organizers of the meeting – Z. Gamsakhurdia, M. Kostava, I. Tsereteli, G. Chanturia and others were arrested. A curfew was imposed on Tbilisi.

The idea held by the leaders of the Empire to check the aspiration of Georgia to national liberty by means of intimidating did not have any effect.

According to the official information meetings of young people in Tbilisi streets were still arranged from the morning of April 10. They expressed their protest and indignation against violence. Meetings were also held in Rustavi, Kutaisi, Sukhumi, Dusheti, etc.

The authorities of the Republic tried to put all the blame "first and foremost" on the leaders of the informal organizations, but the arrested leaders were soon set free at the request of society, and the curfew was lifted in a few days.

The tragedy of April 9 had a wide, though unequal, response all over the world. Almost all the news agencies of the world furnished news of the bloodshed in Tbilisi. Progressive society, in Russia among them, condemned this unforgivable crime. Special committees of the Supreme Soviets of the USSR were established to study the April events, journalistic investigations were carried out, etc.

In December 1989, the second congress of the people's deputies of the USSR heard the report of A. Sobchak, chairman of the Union committee, about the, events of April 9 th. The reactionary camp tried to justify the military men, and put the blame on the demonstrators, but all in vain. The congress condemned using military force against peaceful demonstrators in Tbilisi by a special resolution; however, nobody was punished for it.

The 9th of April was not the event of local significance. It was the continuation of those punitive actions that the Soviet Empire carried out against the freedom-loving nations in the sphere of its influence. The 9th of April once more exposed the despotic character of the Soviet system and revealed the great-power aspirations of the leaders of the Empire.



The tragedy that took place in Tbilisi caused the final bankruptcy of the Communist regime. The change in the party leadership of the Republic (Givi Gumbaridze was elected instead of Jumber Patiashvili) was unable to improve the situation. Rank-and-file members of the Communist Party turned their backs on it and left its ranks en masse demonstratively.

The 9th of April consolidated the Georgians in their fight for the national sovereignty still more. The people killed on that day were declared national heroes. The national liberation movement in Georgia assumed a general character.

The Restoration of Georgia's Statehood

The multiparty elections of October 28, 1990 in Georgia

In the years of the Communist rule, elections were of "universal" character. It was unimaginable to evade voting (the Soviet electorate had never heard the word "absenteeism").

New elections to Georgia's Supreme Soviet were scheduled for March 25, 1990. It was for the first time during the 70 years of the totalitarian regime that a chance of a comparatively free selection of candidates for deputies appeared. Besides the Communist Party the right to nominate and present them was given to offices and organizations, the initiative groups of citizens, etc. Such elections had already taken place in the Baltic republics, and the necessary experience existed. The election campaign aroused a keen interest among the population of Georgia. The People's Front, the Republican Party and the Ilia Chavchavadze Society actively supported the elections. However, these elections turned out to be unacceptable for other national forces that were being established as political organizations. In their opinion, they were illegal and lacked legitimacy, for the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR that had scheduled the elections was illegal itself.

A special conference of the national-liberation movement was held in Tbilisi on March 13-15, 1990. The conference put the elections of March 25 under a boycott; herewith, it established a coordinating and leading organ – a national forum on a par whose duty was to convene Georgia's national congress and appoint "the universal elections of a transitional, coalition, oppositional government".

Georgia's National Democratic Party, the Party of Georgia's Independence, the Society of St. Ilia Martali, Georgia's Helsinki Union, Georgia's Monarchist Party, the Merab Kostava Society, "Mkhedrioni" and others became members of the National Forum. It was joined by about 20 organizations. The supporters of the boycott, the part of the national movement, members of the National Forum, were called a radical, irreconcilable opposition. The rate of its influence and psychological ascendancy on the society was high at that time.

The intelligentsia did not quite understand the nuances of the political process yet and lacked firmness. Many well-known representatives of this stratum who had put up candidates for deputies and actively participated in the election campaign, withdrew their candidatures on the next day of the conference. They justified their decision by the support of the resolution of the National Forum.





Georgia's leadership, whether frightened or advised by the Kremlin, obeyed the will of the national movement. A special session of Georgia's Supreme Soviet was hastily held on March 20 of the same year. The resolution of the session was as follows: "The elections of deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR and the people's deputies to the local soviets shall be transferred to October or November of 1990".

The sixth article of the main law of the USSR that established the total monopoly of the Communist Party throughout the Soviet Union having been annulled, the same session adopted a law of introducing some changes into the constitution and owing to this, allowed the multiparty system.

Shortly after these events, on April 24, 1990 the National Forum split. Due to the ideological-political disagreement with the rest of the organizations, the Helsinki Union, the Society of St. Ilia Martali, the Monarchist Party and Merab Kostava society left the ranks of the Forum. On May 7 of the same year, they founded a new political unity – "the Round Table".

"The Round Table" dissociated from the idea of "the universal national insubordination" planned as a means of restoring Georgia's state independence. They considered it unreal and offered the society "universal elections of temporary high officials".

Three different versions of the election law were prepared and published for universal discussion. The society welcomed this extraordinary event in the long history of the Soviet power with keen interest. Comments and remarks were published in the press.

After a long period of excitement the session of Georgia's Supreme Soviet, taking into consideration the remarks expressed in the press, adopted a bill, worked out by a special commission, envisaging a mixed system of elections. October 28, 1990 was named to be the day of the elections.

There were to be 250 deputies in the future legislative body. Among them 125 were to be elected by a proportional system and 125 by majority vote. The persons to be elected were to be registered in the Central Election Commission, which was staffed with their own representatives. It was necessary to overcome a 4 percent barrier to win the deputy's mandate.

The political parties that remained in the National Forum boycotted these elections as well, in spite of the fact that they were multiparty ones. They first convened a national congress and then founded a national congress by means of elections.

This fact did not slow down the tempo of the election campaign of the Supreme Soviet. The organizations, participating in the elections, at first divided into two camps: the Communist Party was on one side, and all the rest on the other. However, before the elections this arrangement of forces broke up. The camp opposing the communists did not manage to form a united bloc, or maybe they were unwilling to do it. Finally six election blocs were formed ("Liberty", "Agreement, Peace, Renaissance", "the Round Table", "Democratic Georgia" and others), and eight independent political organizations (Georgia's Social Democratic Party, Georgia's Communist Party, Georgia's People's Party, All Georgia Rustaveli Society, Georgia's People's Front, etc.).

About 2,400 candidates to be elected by a proportional system and about 1,000 independent candidates to be elected by a majority system were registered.

A solid corps of international observers attended the elections of October 28. The observers did not overlook trifling deficiencies, but they declared for the whole world to hear that the elections in Georgia were objective.

Georgia's communist rulers



Lavrenti Beria



Vasil Mzhavanadze



Eduard Shevardnadze



Jumber Patiashvili

Struggle for Georgia's independence



Zviad Gamsakhurdia



Merab Kostava



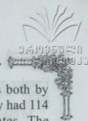
Throwing down of the
monument to Lenin



Changing of the flag
on the Palace of Government



1989 April 9 th



About 70 percent of electors took part in voting. The majority of votes both by proportional and majority systems were won by the bloc "Round Table". They had 114 deputies. The Communist Party, which was second, received 61 mandates. The representatives of the People's Front, "Democratic Georgia", the bloc of "Liberty and Economic Renaissance" got one place each. The further tour of elections did not cause great changes in the arrangement of political forces. "The Round Table – Free Georgia" turned out to be at the head of the country.

The deputies with the exception of very few people were less known or quite unknown people before. The reason for their electing to the Parliament was the fame and authority of their leader, the future president of the country – Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

As for the communists, eminent scientists and other well-known persons instead of secretaries of regional committees, tea-growers, winegrowers, or prominent workers made up their list. However, this did not help them, either, and they were compelled to give up their power. A new stage began in the history of Georgia's statehood on October 28. The Communist regime was peacefully changed. The power was taken by the bloc "Round Table" legally, after winning the multi-party democratic elections. The bloc consisted of the representatives of the national movement. The Communist Party, defeated in the political struggle, filled the ranks of opposition.

The first meeting of the newly elected Supreme Soviet of Georgia took place on November 14, 1990. The session was blessed by the Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia – Ilia II. The deputies by secret ballot elected Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the speaker of the bloc "The Round Table – Free Georgia" chairman of the Supreme Soviet unanimously. A new government, headed by Tengiz Sigua, was approved.

The first law of the Supreme Soviet was dedicated to changing the name Georgian SSR: the country was called the Republic of Georgia. The State emblem, the flag and anthem of the first Republic of Georgia (1918-1921) were restored as state symbols.

The next law was about declaring a transitional period in the Republic of Georgia. In the transitional period whose duration was not defined, the newly elected government was to prepare the political legal fundamentals of the sovereign existence of Georgia, and respective economic foundations.

The restoration of Georgia's independence

In the spring of 1990, disintegration of the Soviet Empire began. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and other "Union Republics", the Russian Federation among them, declared their independence.

On March 9, 1990, the session of the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR adopted a resolution about "the guarantees of protecting Georgia's state sovereignty". Georgia's being a component part of the Empire was declared to be illegal even by the communist rulers. The session condemned the February 25, 1921 sovietization act, it being an intervention and occupation of Georgia by Bolshevik Russia. March 12, 1922 union agreement of establishing the Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Federative Union was found invalid. The December 30, 1922 agreement by which the Soviet Union was founded was also considered to be illegal. Thus, the first legal steps with the purpose of leaving "the



Empire of Evil" were made by the meeting of supreme representatives of the Georgian SSR.

In the conditions of political pluralism, the democratically elected Supreme Soviet of Georgia, as the legitimate supreme legislative body, started restoring the state independence more purposefully, it being the national aspiration of Georgia.

The Centre opposed the natural process of the disintegration of the Empire with all its might. Mikhail Gorbachev, elected president of the USSR, did not conceal his intention, declaring that if Georgia attempted to leave "the brotherly union", it would face problems in the regions on its own territory. Indeed an anti-Georgian mood became obvious in Abkhazia and South Ossetia with Moscow's clandestine and open support. The Abkhazian separatist organization "Aidguilara" demanded turning Abkhazia into a union republic and separating it from Georgia. The union of Ossetian separatists "Adamon Nikhas" wanted South Ossetia to be joined with North Ossetia. Both organizations at the same time provided themselves with arms with the assistance of the Kremlin and got ready for confrontation.

The national government of Georgia received a very bad heritage. Besides political problems, economic, social and other difficulties turned up. The latter became more acute against the background of the opposition with the Centre.

The Supreme Soviet of Georgia gave the highest priority to abolishing Soviet institutions and establishing the national state democratic bodies instead. The plenary powers of soviets were annulled, and the disintegration of collective and soviet farms started. Privatizing of petty enterprises and units began, free enterprises were established, private banks appeared, and the number of independent newspapers and magazines increased. The first signs of the civil society came into being.

The Supreme Soviet repealed the Soviet Union laws that opposed the laws and interests of the Republic of Georgia. The rules of calling up for military service were changed. An internal army-national guard was formed. In March 1991, elections of deputies to local bodies were held, etc.

Each legislative innovation was followed by immediate legal revocation from Moscow. In this "war of laws", the Kremlin still depended on the constitution of the USSR. As for Georgia, this document was ignored. Fundamental changes and additions entered into Constitution of the Georgian SSR too. A law about the transitional period came in force. Preparations for real state independence were going on in the country.

A new union agreement was worked out in the Kremlin to preserve the Empire. The Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics was to be reformed into the union of sovereign Soviet Republics – a new voluntary federative state, based on the principle "strong center-strong republics". The government of Georgia declared resolutely that they would not sign that document. Some other republics also opposed the conception of the union agreement. In the situation created the last means of saving the union state was the plebiscite of the population – a referendum. It was to be held on March 17.

The Supreme Soviet of the Republic prohibited the union referendum on the territory of Georgia, and adopted a resolution of holding a national referendum to oppose it.

On March 31, 1991, a general enquiry of the population on the whole territory of Georgia took place. The participants were to answer the following question: "Are you agreeable to the idea that Georgia's state independence should be restored on the basis of May 26, 1918 Independence Act or not?" Over 3,300,000 people took part in the



referendum. Ninety point eight percent of voters gave a positive answer to the question. The majority of Georgia's non-Georgian population supported the idea of Georgia's independence as well.

The results of the referendum gave more ground to the government of the republic to decide the political fate of the county. Depending on the unanimous will of the population of the Republic, expressed by the referendum of 31 March, the Supreme Soviet declared the restoration of Georgia's state independence on April 9, 1991.

The declared sovereignty made Georgia's independence only juridical, but this independence was to be realized practically. For this, the bloc "Round Table-Free Georgia" thought it necessary to establish the post of the head of the government. The position of president was established in the country.

On April 14, 1991, the Supreme Council Session elected Zviad Gamsakhurdia the first president of Georgia. Akaki Asatiani assumed the leadership of the Council. By the resolution of the session all-national presidential election was set on May 26. Six candidates were nominated: Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Nodar Natadze, Valerian Advadze, Jimmy Mikeladze and others. Zviad Gamsakhurdia won the elections convincingly and became Georgia's president. Eighty-seven percent of the electorate gave him their votes. A new era began in Georgia's state and political life.

Coup D'etat, Civil War and Ethno-Political Conflicts in Georgia

The overthrow of Zviad Gamsakhurdia's government

As it had been expected the road to freedom and independence for the young Georgian state turned out to be full of obstacles. The USSR had not disintegrated yet. The Centre of the Empire prevented the sovereign development of any country that wanted to leave the union.

Outwardly, Moscow did not seem to interfere in Georgia's affairs and followed the tactics of seeming indifference, but in reality, it fought against Georgia by means of inspired conflicts, economic blockades, spreading misinformation about Georgia throughout the world, etc. The Kremlin had other levers of exerting influence on Tbilisi. Georgia remained in the zone of the circulation of the soviet money, the rouble, the state frontiers of Georgia were still defended by the USSR troops, and Soviet military bases were located on Georgian territory.

Georgia's Supreme Soviet declared the armed formations of the USSR to be occupation forces and charged the executive branch with the mission of carrying out measures to expel them, but doing it was beyond the power of the government. The government were sure of their being right, but did not consider the fact that their rightness was to be supported by the necessary power which the state did not have at the time. Georgia's Supreme legislative branch adopted and promulgated a certain number of important laws, but it was rather difficult to introduce them into practice. The old economic system was



in a bad condition. However, a new more effective system was not established and the privatization of the state property was delayed, especially giving land to the peasantry. Other democratic reforms were belated.

The Georgian economy was in bad condition. Breaking connections with the Centre, especially the traditional relations with Russia, resulted in paralyzing the Georgian economy. The supply of imported raw materials that was still used by factories and plants was gradually running out, and the alternatives to the old partners were not found.

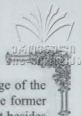
Having no experience of governing the state, the government of the "Round Table" did not succeed in foreign relations either. It is true that the days of the Soviet Empire were numbered; still the western countries avoided having serious confrontations with it. Thus, the recognition of Georgia's sovereignty and the active support that official Tbilisi expected from the democratic world was nowhere to be seen. Moreover, the nationalistic course of Georgia's leaders caused alarm in the political circles of foreign countries. For instance, president of the United States George Bush (senior) characterized Zviad Gamsakhurdia's state policy, which did not coincide with the dynamics of international relations, as "swimming against the flow". Georgia faced the danger of international isolation.

The situation was strained inside the country. The rapture caused by the declaration of independence could not restrain passions. The political process did not follow the liberalization course. State bodies were gradually formed, but the opportunities to develop their institutions – parties, civil society, and independent media – were rather limited. All this stirred discontent of the public with the new government.

The national movement, developed in Georgia in the second half of the 1980s, was characterized by the distrust and disregard of the role of the intelligentsia. Herewith, against the background of opposing the imperial regime not only the party and soviet leaders became the target of this movement, but also all those who were exposed of the cooperation and loyal relations with the communist government. The representatives of the national movement continued to follow the same course after coming into power too. Dissident thinking prevailed in the consciousness of the majority of these people. Creating the image of an enemy from a political opponent, the permanent search for the "Fifth Column", "agents of the Kremlin" or "traitors of the country" among the upper layer of the intelligentsia and the opposition that Zviad Gamsakhurdia's government turned to, made the consolidation of society difficult. "The Round Table" was unable to use the enthusiasm and powerful national energy for the labor and construction process.

The government did not show the ability of political maneuvering. Giving in to opponents, cooperation and a dialogue with them was considered a weakness. It must be said that the opposition was not much distinguished in this respect either. The opposition and the government "spoke" to each other by means of rallies. The rallies of those who supported the government took place in front of the Government House. The members of the opposition got together at Tbilisi State University, the Cinema House, and the television building.

The opposition accused President Z. Gamsakhurdia of ignoring democracy and dictatorial inclinations, of the incorrect policy of choosing personnel that was expressed by appointing people into positions, taking into consideration their personal loyalty and not their professionalism, etc.



Apart from the political opposition, the forces discontented with the change of the Communist regime — the former representatives of the Communist party, the former heads of large enterprises, criminal elements, the part of the intelligentsia that besides losing social privileges faced the danger of losing its usual place in society and moral authority — filled the camp that opposed the government. Students also joined the ranks of the population who associated Georgia's independence with a quick change of the conditions of life for the better, but the reality was different.

The culture and experience of civil opposition was still unknown to the Georgian society that was in the process of formation. The society was unable to play the part of a mediator, an attempt was made, but in vain, they did not manage to reconcile the opposing parties. The efforts of the Orthodox Church were futile as well.

The National congress was in open opposition with the government. The National-Democrats, the National Independence Party, etc. were especially distinguished by their implacability. Some political organizations had their own armed formations that obeyed only their party leaders. The "*mkhedrioni*" (Mounted Men-at-Arms) was an independent military formation. Its head — Jaba Ioseliani — was also in open opposition to Gamsakhurdia. Soon J. Ioseliani was arrested for insubordination to the government. The same fate befell Gia Chanturia and Mamuka Giorgadze, leaders of the National-Democratic Party.

Against this background, the situation in Georgia's Supreme Soviet also became strained. Its activities had been unanimous at the start. In the second half of 1991, the governing majority also began to disintegrate. Merab Kostava's Society (leader Vazha Adamia) left the Round Table and opposed it. A group of deputies who had separated from the majority formed an oppositional political faction. They called themselves "Charter 1991" (leader Tedo Paataashvili).

The 1991 putsch that took place in Moscow in summer was a great challenge for Georgia's government. The President of the USSR M. Gorbachev intended to sign a new Union Treaty with the so-called Union Republics. This treaty limited the power of the center to some extent — it acquired a coordinating function instead of that of governing. The signing of the document was planned to be on August 22. Georgia refused to take part in this agreement from the start.

August 19, 1991 was marked by a split in the supreme government of the Empire. The conservative wing of the government, true to the idea of retaining the Soviet Union in its old form, declared without consulting Gorbachev that the power passed into the hands of a state committee established in the state of emergency headed by G. Yanaev. The committee demanded the subordination of the republics. Russia's president B. Yeltsin and the democratic forces, loyal to him, opposed the organizers of the rebellion. They managed to liquidate the putsch.

The events taking place in Moscow strained the situation in Tbilisi too. The government of the Republic took the demands of the committee into account, avoided confrontation with it, and adopted several compromise decisions. For instance, they changed the status of the National Guards that had a lofty function of defending the country and subordinated it to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The opposition considered this fact, quite reasonable from the point of view of state interests, to be the result of Zviad Gamsakhurdia's weakness and his having no principles, and used it to discredit him. The commander of the National Guards, T. Kitovani, also



expressed his discontent and took detachments of the guards to Rkoni Gorge where they set up their camp. Prime-Minister T. Sigua, who had resigned from his post several days before, also joined the ranks of the opposition. Bessarion Gugushvili was appointed head of the government instead of him.

Georgia's Communist Party took the side of the Moscow putsch organizers, and due to this, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic interdicted this political organization. The plenary powers of the deputies elected to the Supreme Soviet by the lists of the Communist Party were stopped. Many communists, discontented with this resolution of the government, became their implacable enemies.

In the autumn of 1991, the danger of the collision of these opposing parties became obvious. The government broke up the meeting, organized by the National-Democratic Party at the Cinema House on September 2, by force. The radical part of the opposition, outwardly fighting for democratic ideals, but whose main objective was changing the government, took advantage of this fact and started rallying their supporters. The opposition arranged protest meetings regularly, demanding the abolition of the institution of the president and Zviad Gamsakhurdia's resignation. They built barricades in Rustaveli Avenue. The large meetings of the government supporters also became permanent. The governmental information sources aggravated the situation. Neither the opposition forces intended to retreat and to give in.

T. Kitovani brought the guardsmen who were loyal to him to the capital and undertook the defense of the opposition. The president ordered a general mobilization with the purpose of saving the government. He addressed the population of the whole country and asked them to come to Tbilisi.

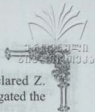
Peaceful talks defused the situation only for a short time. The sacrifice of a young doctor Gia Abesadze turned out to be futile as well. He burned himself publicly to stop his compatriots, ready to fight against one another. Nevertheless, it became impossible to stop bloodshed. The political opposition turned into an armed collision.

Meanwhile no less important events were taking place beyond Georgia's borders. On December 8, 1991, the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia announced about the disintegration of the USSR and the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The agreement, signed in Belovezhsk, was joined on December 21 by eight other Soviet Republics (Georgia was not among them). The Soviet Union officially ceased its existence. These events hastened processes in Georgia even more.

On December 22, 1991, the military formations of the opposition began attacking the besieged government palace. Kitovani's guardsmen, *mkhedrioni* and the armed detachments of Merab Kostava society were the main fighting nucleus. The opposition was supplied with the arms by the headquarters of the Transcaucasian Soviet armies located in Tbilisi. Russian military men provided the government forces with weapons too and Georgians ruthlessly killed one another.

The military operations that went on only in the center of the capital lasted only a few days. Over 100 men were killed and about 550 men were wounded. Several important buildings were destroyed, the Kashveti Church was pierced with bullet holes, an entire residential district was burnt down on Mtatsminda, etc.

On January 6, President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, members of the government, and part of the deputies of the majority left Tbilisi. The power was taken by a Military Council



consisting of Jaba Ioseliani, Tengiz Kitovani and Tengiz Sigua. They declared Z. Gamsakhurdia's regime to be overthrown, disbanded the Parliament, and abrogated the constitution.

The new government called the overthrowing of the national government, elected by the multi-party, free and general elections, a "people's democratic revolution". However, in reality it was a coup d'état that removed the legitimate government and brought about a civil war. On March 11, 2005 the Parliament of Georgia assessed the events of December-January 1991-1992 as "an anti-constitutional armed military coup".

Civil war in Georgia

In the very first year of the restoration of Georgia's state independence a harmful precedent of overthrowing the legitimate government by violence was created. This event turned out to be a national tragedy due to its multi-dimensional results. At the very beginning of 1992 chaos began to reign in Georgia. The economic crisis that had already begun became more acute, criminals started robbing the population, and armed bands raided the country.

The military council's triumvirate did not have enough authority and power to establish order in the country. Governing the country was beyond the possibilities of these three people.

The new government began to persecute their political opponents. Several meetings and manifestations of the supporters of the overthrown regime were mercilessly raided. Scores of people were killed and injured. Many of them were arrested too.

Zviad Gamsakhurdia, driven out of Georgia, sought temporary refuge in Armenia. In the middle of January, he managed to go to Zugdidi via Sukhumi, and from there he went to Chechnya, to the city of Grozny, on the invitation of Chechnyan President Jokhar Dudaev. Z. Gamsakhurdia declared that he did not intend to resign from his post and would fight to return to power.

The supporters of the emigrated president called "Zviadists", established "the insubordination committee" first, then "the movement of Georgia's national deliverance – the opposition front". This movement, founded with the aim of restoring the legitimate government had thousands of members and embraced the whole Georgia. Its direct center was Samegrelo. This part of Western Georgia was distinguished by the number of Zviad Gamsakhurdia's supporters, people who held identical views and were loyal to him. The deputies to the disbanded Supreme Soviet and the military detachments loyal to the overthrown government gradually began to gather there too. A united camp opposed to the Military Council (according to the "Zviadists' terminology "junta"), was established. Alongside political methods, their arsenal also contained other means, such as subversive activities, blocking railway and automobile roads, kidnapping people holding high positions, terrorist acts, etc.

Aiming at stabilizing the situation the Military Council sent the detachments of "mkhedrioni" to Samegrelo. The "restoration of order" turned out to be such a mixture of violence and pillage that it took a form of a severe punitive expedition. This unjustified



action had an opposite result of what had been intended. It strengthened the position of insubordination.

A great part of Abkhazia's population also sympathized with Z. Gamsakhurdia. The Military Council intended to get the better of their unity by demonstrating military force, and at the beginning of February, with the consent of the leaders of the autonomous republic, sent military detachments to the region. The units of the governmental army did not come across any obstacle while moving about the whole territory of Abkhazia. At the end of the month, they returned.

In spite of the fact that the western countries had not condemned the overthrowing of Zviad Gamsakhurdia's government, many of them did not hurry to establish relations and cooperation with Georgia's new illegitimate government. In such conditions, the Military Council decided to bring Eduard Shevardnadze to Georgia. In the opinion of the supporters of the ex-president Shevardnadze himself was one of the leaders of the "putsch", that had happened in Georgia.

Almost all the leaders of Zviad Gamsakhurdia's opposition, and the representatives of intelligentsia, had had contacts with Shevardnadze before the coup d'état too; therefore it was not difficult to persuade him to come to his native country. It is true that at one time Shevardnadze had stated that he would return to Georgia only "If his people asked him to do it", but he agreed to the request of the Military Council too, and arrived in Tbilisi on March 7, 1992.

On March 10 Georgia's State Council, headed by Ed. Shevardnadze was established instead of the Military Council. Its members were the representatives of the parties opposed to the government of the "Round Table" and well-known representatives of intelligentsia. The main objective of the State Council was uniting the society and its consolidation. Ed. Shevardnadze tried to retain the image of a "democrat" which he had obtained in the period of his being the minister of foreign affairs of the USSR during *perestroika*. He published a manifesto of the State Council that called to the population for national agreement and reconciliation, but the political and criminal persecution of the supporters of the overthrown regime did not cease. The distrust between the old and new authorities of the country was so strong that the agreements of their reconciliation, adopted at the talks of their delegations were soon broken.

On June 24, 1992, a group of armed supporters of the ex-president occupied the television tower on Mtatsminda and the building of television and radio broadcasting and called to the population for restoring the overthrown government. The government forces stopped this action quickly, arrested the leaders and put them to prison.

The complicated internal situation in Georgia stimulated the Ossetian and Abkhazian separatist movements. The escalation of the movement turned into a warfare in Abkhazia from the August of 1992. It was clear that it would be difficult for Georgia, divided into two camps, to win the war and retain Abkhazia. On August 28, a day of the reconciliation of all Georgians was held in Kutaisi, but it was not followed by an end of the confrontation between the supporters of the former and current governments.

Armed formations of Zviad Gamsakhurdia's supporters numbering several thousands of armed men, headed by V. Kobalia, occupied the town of Senaki, blockaded the Port of Poti, and blocked the railway and automobile roads leading to Tbilisi. The supporters of the ex-president entered Khobi and Abasha. It was announced that the legitimate power



had been restored in the whole of Samegrelo. The disbanded Supreme Soviet and B. Gugushvili's government began to function in Zugdidi.

The chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Autonomous Republic Ajara, A. Abashidze, undertook the role of a mediator between the fighting parties. An agreement was adopted where the adversaries would conclude peace and take their forces to free Sukhumi, which was besieged by the Abkhazs.

On September 24, 1993, Zviad Gamsakhurdia arrived in Zugdidi. He thought that defeating "Junta's" armies would assist in overthrowing Shevardnadze's regime, and the restored legitimate government would be able to return Abkhazia. V. Kobalia's soldiers did not assist the defenders of Sukhumi. The city fell. The civil war prevented the persecuted Georgian population of Abkhazia from moving to Zugdidi. Several thousands of refugees were forced to walk across the snow-covered mountain paths of Dali Gorge and Svaneti. Scores of children and elderly people died.

Losing the war in Abkhazia made the detachments subordinated to Gamsakhurdia, active. They left Samegrelo and attacked Imereti and Guria. Abkhaz and Chechen "vigilantes" filled their ranks. Towns and villages passed from hand to hand, buildings were bombed, both state and private property was destroyed. There were casualties in the civilian population too.

Ed. Shevardnadze, having agreed to join the Commonwealth of Independent States in October 1993, and the parliament having adopted the corresponding resolution, Russia's government rendered assistance to Georgia's governmental forces and landed the troops from the Black Sea fleet in Poti. Before that, Kobalia's detachments had occupied Samtredia and approached Kutaisi.

Bringing in Russia's troops changed the situation in favor of the governmental detachments. The adherents of the ex-president retreated from the occupied territories. On November 6, they surrendered the town of Zugdidi without fighting. Zviad Gamsakhurdia moved his headquarters to the town of Gali, in Abkhazia. Part of his military formations found shelter in woods and started guerilla warfare.

Georgia's procurator's office brought a suit against Z. Gamsakhurdia, accusing him of treason. A warrant for his arrest was issued too. The security services looked for the ex-president vigorously. His situation became critical. On December 31, 1993, Zviad Gamsakhurdia died in obscure circumstances. It was officially announced that he had committed suicide. The civil war was over.

Zviad Gamsakhurdia, clandestinely buried in Tslenjikha district, was disinterred, brought to Grozno and buried there according to the wish of his family. Later on, this most serious charge was dismissed. The adherents of the overthrown government were freed from imprisonment and rehabilitated. In the spring of 2007, the remains of the first president of Georgia were brought to Georgia and interred in Mtatsminda Pantheon in Tbilisi.

Georgia in the flames of ethnopolitical conflicts

Georgia, being at the stage of forming statehood, found it very difficult to suppress the separatist movements gaining fresh strength in Abkhazia and South Ossetia autonomous regions.



After the tragedy of 9 April, it became obvious that a certain part of national minorities would not support Georgia's independence and would act against it. The idea of Georgia's state independence, territorial integrity and the invulnerability of its frontiers did not suit the nationalistic aspirations of Abkhazs and Ossets. These aspirations were vigorously kindled by the imperial Centre at that very time. The Abkhaz and Osset separatists did not want to be a part of the Georgian state. The Abkhazians asserted that Abkhazia was not Georgia and tried to prove it by falsifying history. As for the Ossetian separatists, they followed the thesis that "the land belongs to the people that live on it" and began preparing to drive out the Georgian population from the Region. The Georgian historians based on historic sources denied these absurd ideas, but the problem appeared to be far beyond academic disputes.

The representatives of the national movement at various political actions categorically condemned the intention of ethnic minorities to separate from Georgia. The vocabulary of the orators at meetings was characterized by nationalistic phraseology. As for the actions, aggressive tone was felt. Abkhazian and Ossetian non-formal nationalistic organizations were also distinguished by aggressiveness. They were not satisfied with mere rhetoric and started buying arms.

a) Conflict in Abkhazia. Separatist tendencies in the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic had been felt before too, and sometimes became quite acute, but Georgia's party leaders made concessions, mostly at the expense of abasing the interests of the local Georgian population, and quieted the situation. Abkhazian separatism had been mostly provoked from outside before too, and now that its opposing Georgia was an exact response to the plans of the Centre, the Kremlin openly supported the Abkhazians.

As early as on August 25, 1990 a session of the Supreme Soviet of the Autonomous Socialist Republic of Abkhazia adopted "a declaration about the state sovereignty of the Abkhazian ASSR." The declaration was the act that did not correspond to the constitution; therefore, Georgia's Supreme Soviet annulled it. Abkhazia remained a constituent part of Georgia and was subordinated to both its juridical and factual jurisdiction.

The communist regime having been replaced and the state independence having been declared, relations between Tbilisi and Sukhumi became politically correct and normal. On December 4, 1990, V. Ardzinba was elected chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Abkhazia, but by that time, the five-year term of plenary powers of the Supreme Soviet had expired. Herewith, according to the law of the Republic of Georgia, adopted on January 29, 1991, the system of local soviets was abolished in the country. This important legislative change was to be reflected in the Abkhazian constitution as well. The process of these changes was delayed, but finally a consensus was reached. A new election law was adopted in agreement with Georgia's government. It was based on distributing the quota on ethnic principle. Out of 65 members of the highest legislative organ of the Republic 28 Abkhaz, 26 Georgian and 11 deputies of other nationalities were to be elected. This innovation violated the principle of equal rights of other nations living in Abkhazia. It especially concerned the Georgians, the majority of the indigenous population of the autonomous region, but the political elite of Georgia of those days was unable to find a different way of discharging the tenseness and retaining stability.



The above-mentioned election law was used to create ethnocratic bodies in the autonomous republic by Abkhazians. A legislative organ was established in Sukhumi that attempted to separate Abkhazia from Georgia constitutionally.

Against the background of outward calmness and stability, internal tension was felt in Abkhazia. The separatists gathered strength. On March 17, 1991, the all-Union referendum took place there in spite of the prohibition of the Georgian government. Its results were significantly falsified, but V. Ardzinba declared that Abkhazia would support the idea of retaining the USSR and would sign the Union agreement. The Georgian population of the region declared a vote of no confidence to the leader of the Autonomous Republic.

Zviad Gamsakhurdia addressed the Abkhaz people and Ardzinba personally many times. He reminded them of the peaceful coexistence of the Georgian and Abkhaz peoples for many centuries, promised them that nobody and nothing threatened the autonomous status of Abkhazia within the borders of the Georgian state and it was possible to conduct negotiations about enlarging the status of Abkhazia. V. Ardzinba continued to conduct an anti-Georgian course defiantly. He openly supported Moscow August "putsch" and joined the ranks of GKChP (State Committee of the Emergency State).

V. Ardzinba did not take into account the interests of the Georgian population as it was, but when the unity of the Georgians broke, and they divided into two camps — Zviad Gamsakhurdia's supporters and their opponents — he ignored their interests altogether.

Soon after overthrowing President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the military Council adopted a resolution enacting the 1921 Constitution of Georgia's Democratic Republic. The session of the Supreme Soviet of Abkhazia, having no quorum, declared the constitution of 1925 restored. This constitution considered the relations of Georgia and Abkhazia based on a union agreement. Alongside this, the Abkhazs prepared for gaining "the right of independence" by force and increased their armament with the assistance of Russia.

The situation in Abkhazia became more strained under the conditions of the civil war that had begun in Georgia. The separatists attacked railway stations and echelons, plundered and carried away numerous goods, exploded a railway bridge, etc. The people kidnapped by the supporters of the ex-president and Abkhazs were taken to Abkhazia, which turned into a criminal enclave. Z. Gamsakhurdia asked the Abkhazs to take part in the fight against Shevardnadze's regime. The situation in the region could have become quite beyond control. The Military Council declared a state of emergency on the Abkhazian railway, and having agreed upon this question with V. Ardzinba, charged the Ministry of Defense to realize it.

On August 14, 1992, Georgia's military forces moved to the territory of Abkhazia to carry out the mission given to them by the state. Detachments of the Abkhazian Guards, lying in wait for them in the woods, opened fire. This was followed by shooting from the opposite side. It was in this way that the war in Abkhazia started. It had been prepared for a long time. The war was based on the psychology of hatred, kindled by the Kremlin and its special organs among the Abkhazs for Georgians. Before the war broke out local historians had worked out the ideology of Abkhazian separatism, and created "the image of an enemy" of Georgians, and the laws and decrees of the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet prepared a legislative base for the war.



The Abkhazian separatists took advantage of the entrance of the Georgian troops into Abkhazia and used it as a pretext for a bloody collision. Georgia found herself involved in a large-scale unjustified war. The country was unable to conduct war alongside the civil war, raging in it, the more so as the Russian state stood behind the separatists.

Russia rendered Abkhazians not only economic and political assistance, but also military help. The Kremlin sent arms, troops, and military specialists. The leaders of the separatists received the information of the intelligence service from Russia's special service; the plans of military operations and occupying towns, worked out in Russia's general headquarters, were also sent to Sukhumi from Moscow. In the period before the military operations started several military camps had been organized in Abkhazia with the assistance of the Kremlin where Russian instructors trained local soldiers.

Several other factors acted against Georgia. Hundreds of North Caucasian "volunteer vigilantes" (Adigs, Circassians, Kabardians and Chechens) arrived in Abkhazia to support the separatists at the appeal of "the Mountain People's Confederation" whose headquarters was in Sukhumi. These people formed several battalions. The Russian Cossacks also presented a significant force. There was another battalion consisting of local Armenian fighters that bore the name of Marshal Bagramyan. They all fought on the side of the Abkhazs.

Russian television and Russia's information agencies, controlled by the security services, presented a powerful means of psychological influence on Georgia. They purposefully spread false information about Georgia.

At the first stage of the war, Georgia's governmental forces seized several strategic points. A sea force landed in the town of Gagra and established its control over the river Psou at the Georgia-Russian state frontier. At the same time, units occupied the city of Sukhumi and its adjacent populated areas. The separatist government of Abkhazia moved to Gudauta.

V. Ardnziba assessed these events "as the occupation of the territory of sovereign Abkhazia", rejected to conduct negotiations with the delegation that had arrived from Tbilisi, and ordered military mobilization.

Despite the number of defects that characterized the Georgian armed formations (they were not subordinated to the united command, part of commanders lacked professionalism, the soldiers were inexperienced, etc.) it was possible to isolate the separatist regime and intern its military formations by acting quickly. Georgia's government chose a different way and stopped the advance of its forces. On September 3, 1992, Ed. Shevardnadze, together with B. Yeltsin and V. Ardnziba, signed a trilateral agreement, envisaging ceasefire and peaceful resolving of the conflict.

The Abkhazian side broke the agreement, counter-attacking and occupying Gagra at the beginning of October. The separatist forces moved in the direction of Leselidze and Gantiadi, and getting hold of the border line gained the means of direct communication with Russia.

In January-March of 1993, Georgia's armed forces improved the situation after the success achieved on the Gumista front. They forced their adversary to give up the intention of attacking Sukhumi. The war took the form of trench warfare.

The Abkhaz separatists again evaded fulfilling the obligations taken by them not to resume military actions and broke the new tri-lateral agreement on the cease-fire of



Georgia, Russia and Abkhazia signed in Sochi on 27 July 1993. The Georgian side withdrew its military equipment from the conflict zone based on the agreement and left only observation posts on the front line. The separatists took advantage of this situation and attacked Sukhumi. The ships and the artillery of Russia's Black Sea fleet participated in the operation.

The defense forces of the city, left without the necessary equipment, were unable to defend the city long under mass bombing. It would have been possible to break through the siege of blockaded Sukhumi if the detachments supporting the overthrown president had helped the city. An agreement about it had existed between their commanders and the governmental military formations, but Z. Gamsakhurdia's supporters broke it at the last moment.

The enemy took Sukhumi on September 27, 1993. They continued their attack and reached the River Enguri – the administrative border of Gali and Zugdidi districts – at the end of month. The military operations ended in Georgia's defeat. The Georgian government lost jurisdiction over Abkhazia.

The Separatists, the Cossacks and the Northern Caucasus "vigilantes", who supported them, treated the civilian population brutally. A mass slaughter of Georgians took place in Gagra. The chairman of the Council of Ministers of Abkhazia, Zhiuli Shartava, who had been taken prisoner, was first tortured and then shot. The same thing was done to G. Gabeskiria, the mayor of the city of Sukhumi.

Besides the heroic fighting and selflessness of separate fighters, the war was characterized by pillage and many actions not worthy of Georgian and Abkhazian traditions. At the same time, there were many cases when an ethnic Abkhaz sheltered and saved a Georgian fighter, and a Georgian spared and rescued an Abkhazian fighter who was only an adversary and not a mortal enemy for him. This circumstance inspired hope that it would be possible for Georgians and Abkhazs to be reconciled, but it was not properly taken advantage of. The result of the war actions and the bloody squaring of accounts that followed them was that about 30,000 Georgians were killed in Abkhazia. Three hundred thousand inhabitants (among them 250,000 Georgians) were driven out of their homes. The ethno-demographic balance was radically changed in the Region. The Abkhazian gene pool suffered great losses as well. The war destroyed the centuries-long peaceful co-existence of Georgians and Abkhazs, their traditional friendship and relationship and created the atmosphere of estrangement.

Georgia lost the information war too. Although when Sukhumi fell Eduard Shevardnadze said for the entire world to hear that what was happening in Abkhazia was a conflict between Russia and Georgia, the official Tbilisi was unable to prove this at the international level. Big states of the West did not see "grains of evil of the world scale" of the aggressive separatism in the events that had happened in Abkhazia (Ed. Shevardnadze). Public opinion abroad preferred to believe the misinformation spread by the Russian media. According to it, the Georgians oppressed the Abkhaz people that were not numerous. In reality, Moscow was annexing the Georgian territory with the help of Abkhaz separatists. This fact became more obvious a short time later. In addition, after the war ended Russia – who was one of the parties of the conflict – was given a chance to undertake the function of a mediator and play a role of a peacemaker. Russian peacekeeping forces were deployed in Abkhazia with a CIS mandate.



In November 1993, the process of negotiations started with the purpose of settling the conflict. It was carried out under the aegis of the UNO, with the participation of the OSCE and the "mediation" of Russia. The following year "a group of Georgia's friends of the UNO general secretary" was established. It consisted of the USA, France, Germany and Great Britain. Its purpose was assisting the peace process. The international commonwealth recognized Georgia's territorial integrity and the inviolability of its frontiers unconditionally. The OSCE considered that an ethnic purging of the Georgian population was carried out in Abkhazia and condemned it officially at its summits in Budapest (1994), Lisbon (1996) and Istanbul (1999).

The Security Council of the UNO also adopted several resolutions on the Abkhazian issue, but no progress was seen in the practical settling of the conflict. The separatist regime did not agree to the exclusive autonomous rights, offered to them by the Georgian side, and rejected the peace plans of international organizations and some western states. No way was found to return the indigenous population, driven out of Abkhazia, to their native land, etc.

The de-facto government of Abkhazia, with the support of Russia, managed to institutionalize the separatist regime. In November 1994, the constitution of the Abkhazian republic was adopted. In October 1999, "The act of Abkhazia's state independence" was published and the parliament and the president were elected. V. Ardzinba was the first president of Abkhazia. S. Bagapsh has been occupying this position since 2005.

After the Rose Revolution Georgia's new government tried to settle the conflict by changing the form of the peace process, by raising a question of substituting the Russian military detachments by international forces, by activating people's diplomacy, by offering the Abkhazian side important economic projects, etc; but all with no result.

Russia took advantage of the delayed process of settling the conflict. It essentially had control over the whole of Abkhazia, and took the course of appropriating it legally. The Kremlin declared the remaining population of the region to be its citizens, gave them Russian passports and undertook "defending" them.

In April 2008, President V. Putin adopted an illegal decision to start direct cooperation of the Russian Federation with the self-declared republics of Abkhazia and the so-called South Ossetia. Soon after that, Moscow, without consulting Georgia, sent a battalion of railway troops to Abkhazia and restored the track of the Sukhumi-Ochamchire line. In the August of 2008, Russia's air, sea and land forces invaded Georgia, occupying the whole of Abkhazia and other territories as well. The Kremlin, fully ignoring the principles of the international law, acknowledged Abkhazia's state independence.

The international commonwealth condemns Russia's aggression against Georgia and requests that Russia abandon its decision of recognizing and acknowledging the separatist regimes.

b) Conflict in South Ossetia. While building the independent state, Georgia's national government tried to settle the conflict in South Ossetia by peaceful means, by using legal mechanisms. In this region, there had also been tendencies of separatism for quite a long time. There the anti-Georgian forces sometimes demanded integrating South Ossetia into North Ossetia or turning this territory into a soviet republic of South Ossetia.

The Ossetian separatism that had died out in the 1920s was reanimated once more by the revival of the national movement in Georgia. In November 1989, the Soviet of the



People's Deputies of the Autonomous Region of South Ossetia adopted a resolution of changing the status of the region and turning it into an autonomous republic. The adoption of such a resolution was beyond the prerogative of the regional soviet, and the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR annulled it at once, but the separatist forces did not stop their activities and continued them in alliance with the imperial center.

Southern Ossets had all the conditions in Georgia for the national, cultural, social-political and economic development. However, the Georgians living on the territory of the autonomous region were essentially deprived of the possibility of developing the Georgian culture and using their mother tongue that is the state language of the Republic.

The representatives of the Ossets living in the Inner Kartli (Shida Kartli) arranged provocative actions against the Georgian population. They began to damage the monuments of the Georgian culture, to artificially distort the toponyms or substitute them by the Ossetian ones. Armed attacks on Georgians became frequent, etc.

At the appeal of one part of the leaders of the national movement, a column of many thousands started for Tskhinvali to support the Georgian population, but Russian military men and Osset vigilantes barred the way to the participants of the action at the entrance to the town.

On September 20, 1990 the session of the Regional Soviet of People's Deputies of South Ossetia adopted a declaration "about the sovereignty of South Ossetia", which said: 1. The Autonomous Region of South Ossetia shall be turned into South Ossetian Democratic Republic and 2. The Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall be requested to receive South Ossetia as an independent subject of the federation in the USSR. This resolution factually meant the seceding of South Ossetia from Georgia. The organ that had adopted it did not have the right to do it. On September 21, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR abrogated this illegal decree. "The war of laws" did not end there.

The new session of the deputies of the Autonomous Region, convened in the October of 1990, declared the formation of the South Ossetian Republic officially, and appointed the elections to its supreme and local soviets in December.

On November 22, the newly elected Supreme Soviet of Georgia annulled the resolution of the Soviet of People's Deputies of the South Ossetian Autonomous Region about turning South Ossetia into a republic. The appointment and holding the elections were also annulled. A certain number of villages boycotted the elections too, but in spite of this, voting took place (according to the official information of Tskhinvali 71 percent of the local population took part in the elections).

The Georgian population of South Ossetia convened a congress in Tskhinvali and declared their insubordination to the authorities of the Region.

On December 11, 1990, the Supreme Soviet of Georgia adopted a law abolishing South Ossetian Autonomous Region and its Soviet of People's Deputies. Apart from this, the December 9, 1990 elections to the Supreme Soviet of "the South Ossetian Soviet Republic" and their results were found illegal and were annulled. From this day on the escalation of the conflict entered a new phase. "The war of laws" turned into an armed collision. The Osset separatists were encouraged by the USSR President Gorbachev's decree of January 7, 1991 about restoring the South Ossetian Autonomous Region.



Georgia's supreme legislative body considered Gorbachev's decree devoid of all juridical foundation and unwarranted interference in Georgia's internal affairs. It was said in the decree that no body of the USSR government had the right to reject the law of the Republic of Georgia judicially, for Georgia was a sovereign country and had a territorial supremacy within her borders.

On March 23, 1991, Zviad Gamsakhurdia's meeting with Boris Yeltsin, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR was held in Kazbegi. The talks mainly concerned the situation in Inner Kartli and the ways of the political settling of the conflict. It is stated in the joint document, signed by the leaders of Georgia and Russia that South Ossetia's Autonomous Region does not exist any more and it is referred to as a "territory".

Despite this, the reality was still serious. The Georgian militia, whose duty was to stabilize the situation in the region, was unable to control the situation there, especially after detachments of the USSR internal army were brought to the region "to restore order". It encouraged the Ossetian "vigilantes" and their actions became more aggressive. Ruthless and sadistic were the ways they used while killing the Georgians. The separatists marauded, got into Georgian orthodox Christian churches along with Russian soldiers and destroyed them. It became more difficult for the unarmed Georgian population of the former autonomous region to defend themselves. As for the Ossetian separatists, the tempo and the scale of their being armed grew with the help of the Russian regiments located in Tskhinvali. A mass driving out of the Georgian population began. The Georgians left Tskhinvali and its adjoining villages. They became refugees in their own country. Many Ossets, living in Georgian villages, migrated to North Ossetia.

After the coup d'état and Ed. Shevardnadze's arrival in Georgia a Russian-Georgian agreement was signed in Sochi (Dagomis) on June 24, 1992. Its main result was ceasing fire in the zone of the conflict. Herewith, a mixed controlling commission was formed to settle the conflict. Representatives of Georgia, "South Ossetia", Russia and North Ossetia participated in it. A trilateral 1,500-men united contingent of peacekeeping forces was created consisting of Georgians, Russians and Southern Ossets.

Since 1993, the European organization of security and cooperation (OSCE) was involved in settling the conflict. Its mission is open and operating in Georgia.

Georgia has expressed her readiness to settle the conflict by political and peaceful means several times. This fact is reflected in many international documents – announcements, records of proceedings, memoranda, agreements, formed in various years, etc. Official Tbilisi always fulfilled the obligations taken by them, did not avoid discussing the question of the South Ossetia's status within the borders of Georgia, but the precondition for that was the return of refugees to the conflicting Region.

As for the factual leaders of Tskhinvali who were first under the clandestine and later open protection of the Kremlin, they did not agree to the proposal of the Georgian side. In the November of 1993, they declared South Ossetia to be a sovereign state, adopted a constitution, and elected a president. The post of the president was first held by L. Chibirov and then by Ed. Kokoi. Both of them played the role of Moscow's marionettes, acted by its dictation, and instead of the real settling of the conflict aspired to retain the separatist regime. Thus, in spite of the active participation of the international community the settling of the conflict has been delayed. In the spring of 2007, Georgia's government presented a new initiative of a full-scale and peaceful settling of the above-mentioned conflict.

People's festival "Tbilisoba"

საქართველოს
საზოგადოებრივი
მემკვიდრეობის
სამსახური



Catholicos-Patriarchs of Georgia



Kirion II (1917-1918)



Leonide (1918-1921)



Ambrossi Khelaya (1921-1927)



Kalistrate (1932-1953)



Ephrem (1960-1972)



Ilia II (1977-)



President Mikheil Saakashvili proposed to create a temporary administrative region on the whole territory of the former South Ossetian Autonomous Region. Such a political formation was really established based on the respective law, and ratified by the parliament. Dimitri Sanakoev was appointed its head. A number of economic projects were realized etc. but Russia's aggression on Georgia in August 2008 made the solution of the problem a matter of a long period. The Kremlin, violating all the international norms, acknowledged the independence of the self-declared republic and deployed Russia's military units in the Region instead of peacekeeping forces. The former South Ossetian Autonomous Region is not under the jurisdiction of Georgia and is occupied by Russia's troops. The European Union, the western countries and international organizations, supporting Georgia's territorial integrity, condemn Russia's actions and continue diplomatic activities to restore the historic justice.

The Georgian Church in Soviet times

The lot of the Georgian Church under Soviet power was as unhappy as that of the Georgian people. The Church of Iveria, which had freed itself from the bonds of Russia's Sacred Synod, did not manage to spread its activities during the three-year period of the Georgian Democratic Republic. The Social-Democratic government, being of Marxist orientation and atheistic, did not pay proper attention to the country's church. Several legislative acts were published which restricted the rights of the church (the number of religious holidays was reduced, the teaching of the Divine Law was forbidden, etc.). The Church was separated from the State and the school from the Church according to the 1921 Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Georgia's Apostolic Church was made equal to the other religions practised in the country.

About a month after the state independence had been declared, Catholicos-Patriarch Kirion II — who was elected in 1917 after the autocephaly of the church had been restored — was killed in mysterious circumstances. The church council elected metropolitan Leonide (Okropiridze) catholicos-patriarch of all Georgia. He had to defend himself from the claims of the Russian church, which did not recognize the independence of the Georgian church and aspired to subordinate it to itself again.

The Patriarch did not live long after Georgia had been again conquered by Bolshevik Russia. His place was taken by the metropolitan of Tskhum-Abkhazia - Ambrosi (Khelaya) who was elected Catholicos-Patriarch in September 1921.

The Soviet regime opposed the Church from the very start. They saw in it the "support of chauvinistic and counter-revolutionary forces". The Church was proscribed. Its property was confiscated and passed to the state. Parts of crosses, icons and other church property were sent to Russia, precious stones were removed from them, and gold and silver was melted and used for various purposes.

Churches and monasteries were closed and many churches were demolished. Some of them were turned into clubs or storehouses. Red flags were hoisted on some of the churches instead of crosses. Divine service was stopped in most of them. Many servants of the church were arrested and punished, and believers in God were persecuted. During the two years following the establishment of Soviet power, the number of eparchies was reduced, etc.



On its part Georgia's Church, whose priests and other servants did not leave their conquered country and go abroad, considered the Bolshevik regime to be illegitimate and opposed its violence as far as it could. In 1922, Catholicos-Patriarch Ambrosi sent a memorandum to the Genoa International Conference. He exposed the communist dictatorship imposed upon the Georgian nation, and requested that Russia's armies of occupation be immediately withdrawn from Georgia. Georgia's Church sympathized with the national-liberation struggle in the country and encouraged the threatened nation with spiritual support.

The government arrested Catholicos-Patriarch Ambrosi Khelaya, but did not dare to put him to death. The Soviet court sentenced him to seven years of imprisonment. The Patriarch revealed unusual firmness and courage. He delivered a passionate speech at the trial, saying, "I have done my duty ... My soul belongs to my God, my heart – to my country, as for my carrion, you may have it, tyrants!"

An all-embracing people's uprising was being prepared in Georgia. The Church shared the aspiration of the people ready to fight for freedom. The Kutaisi Metropolitan Nazar and four other ecclesiastics were arrested and accused of anti-soviet propaganda. All of them were shot, sentenced to death by a special "troika". Reprisals against the Church became more severe. Not only living ecclesiastics were tried, but also heroes, canonized by church as saints. For instance, they did this to the remains of the saintly brothers David and Konstantine Mkheidze who had selflessly fought against the Arab invaders in the eighth century, and were buried in the Motsameta Monastery (the Monastery of Martyrs).

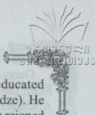
Having suppressed the 1924 uprising, the ruling regime published an amnesty. The long-suffering Patriarch Ambrosi was set free, but he soon died.

The soviet government tried to split the Georgian Orthodox Church from the inside and inculcate "the renovation movement" in it, as they had done in the Russian Church. "The renovated church" was to simplify religious rites, prohibit the institute of monks and nuns, to transfer the church calendar to the new style, etc. At the same time it was to recognize the communist regime, and be subordinated to it.

Metropolitan Christophore III (Tsitskishvili), elected Georgia's Catholicos-Patriarch in 1927, with the purpose of saving the Church physically, preferred to reconcile with the soviet government and declared a loyal course. The compromise on the part of the Church was not followed by any concessions on the part of the government. On the contrary, the fight against religion and the propaganda of atheism became stronger.

The government tried to substitute the belief in God and traditional religion with communist ideology. Communist celebrations were imposed upon people instead of religious holidays. Christenings, religious wedding ceremonies, and funeral services were forbidden. "A Union of Fighting Atheists" was founded in 1929. This Union set its members on churches and monasteries, stirred up aggressive anti-religious activities across the country and created an atmosphere of psychological terror.

Georgia's Church was threatened with degeneration and extinction. Wearing a cassock and a cross, doing clerical work in this reality was equal to losing one's life. In 1937, in the period of great political repressions, scores of Georgian clerics were shot and exiled. The government intended to close two cathedrals – Sioni and Svetitskhoveli – and the construction of a bathhouse was planned in the place of Kashueti Church, etc.



From 1932, the Georgian Church was headed by an extremely well educated ecclesiastic, theologian and scholar – Catholicos -Patriarch Kalistrate (Tsintsadze). He fought for the restoration of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church when tsarism reigned in the country. When he became patriarch, his main aim was to rescue the Georgian Church and preserve its faith. Owing to his great authority, the spiritual teacher of the nation managed to save Georgia's Orthodox Apostolic Church, one of the oldest churches in the world, from destruction in the hardest years, preserving its faith for its believers.

During World War II, the attitude of the Kremlin towards church changed and became more tolerant. J. Stalin realized the factor of the church correctly, its role and influence on the broad masses of the population, and tried to use it in the interests of the state that was engaged in war. Georgia's church condemned fascism and supported the country's political leadership in its fight against the enemy. The Church raised a substantial sum of money through donations and paid it into the Defense Fund for the needs of the front.

In 1943, the institute of patriarch was restored in Russia. This year was also an important date for Georgia's Church. Russia's Church acknowledged the territorial autocephaly of the Georgian Church and resumed Eucharistic ties with it.

Georgia's Church regained its juridical status due to the efforts of the Catholicos-Patriarch, but the Church remained the object of the total control of the state. For this purpose, a committee dealing with the affairs of the church was established. As for the republics, the institute of its charge d'affairs was set up. This apparatus, whose members were the employees of the security services, were to watch all the activities of the Church.

In 1952, Catholicos-Patriarch Kalistrate died and his place was occupied by a new ecclesiastic – Melkisedek III (Pkhaldze). After J. Stalin's death, the process of liberalization begun in the Soviet Union did not change the position of the church greatly. The state interfered in its life unceremoniously again and tried to weaken its increasing authority by stirring up opposition inside the Church. It is true that several churches were opened in Georgia, but the government did not allow to open a theological seminary, hindered restoring the historic relations of the Georgian Orthodox church with the other orthodox churches of the world, etc.

Hard was the situation of the Georgian Church in the following years when Catholicos-Patriarchs Ephrem II (Sidamonidze) and David V (Devdariani) (1972-1977) were in office. The ecclesiastics were heavily taxed; robbing and oppressing churches went on. In spite of such a situation, Patriarch Ephrem sanctified three bishops in 1963. Ilia Gudushauri – Shiolashvili, a graduate of Moscow Theological academy was among them. He was made head of Shemokmedi eparchy. He was also made head of the courses of priests at a newly opened theological school in Mtskheta.

In 1963, "The New Testament" was published. The publication was blessed and sanctified by Catholicos-Patriarch Ephrem II. The publication of the annual church calendar was resumed, etc. In the very same year, Georgia's Orthodox Christian Church became member of the World Council of Churches. It was the sign of its international recognition.

Patriarch David V had to overcome many problems caused by objective reasons or created artificially. The government did their best to remove believers from the church. In 1975, at Easter Holiday, believers who had gathered at Sioni and Svetitskhoveli were terrorized by explosions set off in the yards of these churches. The contingent to be enrolled in Mtskheta theological Seminary was under strict observation.



Georgia's Church found itself before a new challenge. In the last year of life of its head, David V, the first among the ecclesiastics, according to hierarchy, was Tskhum – Abkhazian Metropolitan Ilia who was considered his co-regent. However, there was no written decree of the Patriarch to that effect. In such cases, according to the church regulations, the regent was to be elected by the Synod. Catholicos-Patriarch David V died on November 9, 1977 and the Synod appointed Metropolitan Ilia regent.

Several members of the synod were against this decision. They intended to prevent the fulfilment of this quite legitimate decree in a very unworthy way. One of the ecclesiastics even denounced the elected Metropolitan to the Kremlin as an instigator and supporter of dissidents. The Church Council, convened in December 1978, took the effective work of the Tskhum-Abkhazian Metropolitan into consideration and elected him Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia under the name of Ilia II.

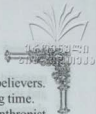
After the enthronement of the new Catholicos-Patriarch, an era of revival began in Georgia's Church. It must be said that the Orthodox Christian Church of the country did not have good times at the end of the 1970s either. The majority of the ecclesiastics were advanced in years, and some of them were near a critical age. There were scarcely any religious books in Georgian, any Georgian icons or clothing, etc.

Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II set the following mission to the Georgian Church: to raise the level of spiritual life of the Georgian nation and strengthening Christian faith among different layers of the population. The spiritual teacher of the nation revived divine service in the eparchies of Western and Eastern Georgia, consecrated and sanctified several bishops, paid considerable attention to preaching in churches that taught the believers to be morally pure, to love their kith and kin and their country. The sermons of the Patriarch himself were permeated by religious and national-patriotic ideas. More and more people came to church to listen to his sermons. Divine service was restored in some of the old churches. Every day prayers and psalms were published and spread among the believers. Religious magazines *The Cross of Vine* and *A Theological Collection* were issued and the publication of the newspaper *The Patriarchy News* began. In 1988, the Bible was published. In the same year, a theological seminary was established. Later on, Gelati Academy began functioning; several theological schools were opened, etc.

The full-blooded processes going on in the Church, coincided with the development of the national-liberation movement in Georgia. The great majority of the public, especially the younger generation, began to turn towards the Church. It was not simply the wish to taste a forbidden fruit. The belief in Orthodox Christianity began to revive in the population.

Gradually the relations of the Georgian Church with the churches of foreign countries began to broaden. In 1972, Ilia II was elected co-president of the World Council of Churches. January 25, 1990 is a notable date in the history of Georgia's Orthodox Christian Apostolic Church. On that day, the World Patriarchy recognized and officially acknowledged the historic autocephaly of Georgia's Church.

Georgia's state independence having been restored, the Orthodox Christian Church regained its place in the life of the Georgian nation. Scores of new churches were built in Georgia's towns and villages and divine service was resumed in many deserted churches. In 2002, a constitutional agreement-concordat was signed between the Georgian Orthodox-Christian Church and the Georgian State. It has been in force since that time. The law defines and protects the rights and freedom of other religious confessions. According to



the sociological inquiries of recent years, 85 percent of Georgia's population are believers. It is a good index for the country, which lived in atheistic environment for a long time.

In 1995, with the donations of the population, and especially those of the philanthropist Bidzina Ivanishvili, the foundation of a grand cathedral was laid. It was called "the construction of the millennium". The construction work lasted eight years. In 2003, the capital of the country received a beautiful cathedral, built in the name of the Holy Trinity.

Georgian Culture in the Period after World War II

The soviet epoch left its traces in all the spheres of culture. Culture was a weapon used in politics, an instrument of "bringing up masses of workers" and building a new system. Education, science, literature and art were subjected to ideology and filled with communist dogmas.

Swaddled in Bolshevik ideology, Georgian culture developed, struggling between national ideals and the soviet ones. Besides that, it had to have a dialogue and cooperation with the cultures of other peoples that were part of the Soviet Union. The totalitarian regime took care of raising the spiritual standards of the population's life, but restricted the creative freedom of culture, subordinated it to its control and directed it in the interests of the state.

Under these circumstances the Georgian culture retained the function of remaining an important arena of maintaining and expressing the national identity. The Georgian people, having no part in political processes, revealed their national energy and intellectual potential in the sphere of culture.

Education

Progress was especially noticeable in the field of education. The seven-year general compulsory education in Georgia was introduced before World War II. The following stage – a compulsory eight-year education was finished by the mid 1960s, and another goal – establishing a general compulsory secondary education – was set, but it was not fully realized.

More and more finances were allotted for education in the post-war period. The network of schools increased regularly as did the number of students and teachers. The material-technical and teaching base of educational institutions became larger as well. While in 1944-45 there were 627,000 students in 4,785 schools providing general education, and 39,000 teachers taught them, by 1971 there were 4,571 schools in the Republic, with over a million students and 77,000 teachers (the reduction of the number of schools was a result of their enlargement. This process was characteristic of the beginning of the 1980s).

Several reforms were carried out in the system of education since the 1950s. The law adopted in 1958 envisaged the following items: consolidating contacts with school life, introducing polytechnic education, merging school education with practical training



mastering various trades. The government began founding boarding schools for orphans and the children of indigent parents in 1959. Schools where children could stay after classes until their parents came home from work were opened in 1960 with the purpose of assisting their parents. In 1962, schools with seven-year education were turned into eight-year schools, and ten-year schools were turned into 11-year schools. Soon schools returned to ten-year education, and in 1974, the polytechnic education system was abolished.

Alongside the Georgian schools there were Abkhazian and Ossetian primary schools, Russian, Armenian, Azerbaijani secondary schools in which the national minorities received their education in their native languages.

Great attention was paid to the Russian language and literature in the soviet schools from the very start. The hours allotted to these subjects increased considerably beginning with 1946. In 1973, these subjects were introduced into the Georgian schools from the first year.

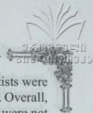
The obvious achievement of the system of people's education was the fact that the number of the young people having a secondary education grew, but in spite of this, there were serious shortcomings in the sphere of education. The frequent reorganization of schools of general education was one of them. It hindered the processes of teaching and raising students. Since 1944-1945, the language of instruction in Abkhazian and Ossetian schools, which in fact had been Russian schools, became Georgian, by Moscow's order. This news stirred up discontent among Ossetian and Abkhazian populations. In 1953, Russian again replaced the Georgian language.

School foundations were insufficient; there were not enough buildings for schools. Owing to this, after the war period the teaching process in some schools was conducted in two or three shifts. A great part of school buildings, especially in rural areas, needed repairing. The secondary school was unable to reveal the talents and abilities of students fully. The standards of teaching were behind the demands of the time and international standards.

The development of higher education in Georgia was stable. A new challenge for it was a scientific-technical revolution that began in the world in the 1950s. The scientific potential of higher educational institutions grew; the material-technical base became stronger. A Teacher-Training Institute of Foreign Languages was opened in the capital, a new building was built for Tbilisi State University, Georgia's Agricultural and Veterinarian Institutes moved to new buildings, Sukhumi and Telavi Teacher-Training Institutes also settled down in new buildings.

A number of new departments began to function in the higher educational institutions of the Republic. Among them were the Department of Cybernetics at Tbilisi University, one of the first in the USSR, and a Department of Information Technology at the Polytechnic Institute. New specialties were introduced: mathematical linguistics, radioactive biology, genetics, study of art, etc. The number of students enrolled in higher educational institutions was increased. While there were 56,300 students in Georgia in 1956-1960, there were 85,000 students in 1980.

According to the 1959 census, 38 inhabitants out of every thousand in Georgia had a higher education. Later on, this index grew and Georgia occupied one of the first places in the world in this regard.



Unfortunately, the quality was lower than the quantity. Many famous scientists were in the service of students, taking part in the formation of specialists out of them. Overall, higher educational institutions did not have enough qualified professors; there were not enough textbooks, no modern study rooms and laboratories.

The State took special care of teaching social sciences: the history of the CPSU, political economy, scientific communism at higher educational institutions. Their main concern was ideological work among students, their bringing up in a "communist spirit". Special attention was paid to teaching the Russian language. In 1947, the Pushkin Tbilisi State Teacher-Training Institute was turned into a Russian Institute mainly. The number of departments preparing different Russian-speaking specialists in other institutions increased as well. At the turn of the 1970s and 1980s the Kremlin intended to introduce a bilingual education in Georgia's higher educational institutions (teaching in Russian and Georgian), but due to a strong resistance of teachers and students it was unable to realize this intention.

Science

The period following World War II, was a time of great and quick development. Georgia's Academy of Sciences was the centre of scientific work. It was founded in 1941. Initially, there were 16 members in the Academy. By 1952, their number increased to 37 and in 1990, it was over 70.

From the 1940s and 1980s, almost all of the branches of modern science were present and developing in Georgia. The preparation and publication of an eight volume Georgian monolingual dictionary was an important event in Georgia's scientific and cultural life. The same can be said about the publication of the *Soviet Georgia's Encyclopedia* (twelve main and two additional volumes). The publication of five-volume encyclopedia "Georgia" began in 1997. *Tbilisi, The Georgian Language* and other encyclopedic works were published.

Georgian historical science presented the participation of the Georgian nation in the development of civilization and the world history. Georgian historians studied the Georgians' ethnogenesis, Georgia's historic past and present, relationship with neighboring and other peoples. Georgian historians were successful in exploring historic-ethnological and other important problems of Georgia, the Caucasus, and the Near East. The traditions of the historical school of Ivane Javakhsishvili, Simon Janashia and Niko Berdzenishvili were followed and developed by their disciples and the researcher-historians of the following generation. Academician Giorgi Melikishvili was the first among the Soviet historians who was awarded the Lenin Prize for the fundamental monographs *Nairi-Urartu* and the *Urartu Cuneiform Inscriptions* written in 1953-1954.

Shota Meskhia, Akaki Surguladze, Giorgi Dzidzaria, Zurab Anchabadze, Mariam Lordkipanidze, David Muskhelishvili, Roin Metreveli, Ushangi Sidamonidze and others enriched the Georgian historiography with important works.

The publication of *The History of the Georgian Nation* in French (1980) and English (1983) by Nino and Kalistrate Salias, a husband and wife living and working in Paris, is proof of the interest of the world scholarly circles in Georgian history. This book was



awarded a prize of the Academy of Sciences of France. The emigrant Georgian scholar, Giorgi Sharashidze, studied the following questions: *Prometheus and the Caucasus, An Introduction to the Study of the Georgian Feudalism (The Laws of Giorgi the Illustrious)* in French.

In 1997 Nodar Asatiani's and Aleksandre Bendianishvili's work *Histoire de la Georgie* was published in French in Paris. In this work, the latest achievements of the Georgian historiography are presented.

After Georgia's independence was restored great attention was paid to the history of the Georgian public's thinking (Mikheil Gaprindashvili), the Soviet period and modern history, Georgia's first republic (Aleksandre Bendianishvili), Georgian emigration (Guram Sharadze), and the interpretation of these subjects in a new manner.

Archeology and ethnology developed greatly in the post-war period. Archeological discoveries in Mtskheta, Trialeti, Vani and Bichvinta (Pitsunda) evoked a wide resonance (Giorgi Nioradze, Andria Apakidze, Otar Japaridze, and Otar Lordkipanidze). In recent times, a small settlement called Dmanisi attracted everybody's attention. It has a secure place on the world archaeological map. The skulls, jaw, and shinbones of *Homo erectus*, the oldest on the Eurasian continent (about 1.8 million years old) were found here. The Dmanisi discovery (David Lordkipanidze) changed the conception of the hominids' spread in the non-tropical world and gave the anthropologists important material to study man's evolution. Such authoritative magazines as *Nature*, *Science*, *National Geographic*, etc. dedicated their publications to the Dmanisi archeological discovery.

The development and progress of the Georgian ethnology is connected with the names of Giorgi Chitaya, Vera Bardavelidze, Aleks Robakidze, and others. The achievements of Georgian historians are reflected in the collective work *Essays on Georgian History*, published in eight volumes and awarded the state prize of Georgia.

Fundamental works in linguistics were written by academicians Akaki Shanidze, Giorgi Akhvlediani, and Arnold Chikobava. The works of Varlam Topuria, Tamaz Gamkrelidze, and Ketevan Lomtadze and others developed linguistics still more. Their research into the Iberian-Caucasian linguistics was acknowledged.

The history of literature is distinguished by the names of the following scholars: Korneli Kekelidze, Pavle Ingorokva, Simon Kaukhchishvili, and Aleksandre Baramidze. Important landmarks of Georgian literature were published. These are as follows: Georgian folklore (a multi-volume edition), complete collections of Georgian classics' works, etc. Victor Nozadze, the writer working in emigration, dedicated several books to the problems of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*.

Academician Giorgi Tsereteli founded a solid school of oriental studies in Georgia (Sergi Jikia, Konstantine Tsereteli, and Valerian Gabashvili) which played a considerable part in the research into oriental languages and history. A well-known Georgian scholar - Mikhako Tsereteli - succeeded in studying the Hittite world in emigration.

The well-known scholars on arts Giorgi Chubinashvili, Shalva Amiranashvili, Vakhtang Beridze, Vakhtang Jobadze, and others studied and analyzed fundamental questions of the history of the Georgian art in their works, among them the rich national cultural heritage.



The Georgian philosophic school represented by Shalva Nutsubidze, Kote Bakradze, Niko Chavchavadze, Shalva Khidasheli, Merab Mamardashvili, and Zurab Kakabadze was highly appreciated.

Great is the share of the Georgian psychology school in the treasury of scholarship. *The Experimental Method of Analysis – The Theory of Set*, known as “Uznadze’s Effect” must be specially distinguished. Dimitri Uznadze’s activities in psychology were followed by the scientific and pedagogical work of Angia Bochorishvili, Aleksandre Prangishvili, and Revaz Natadze.

The scientific works of Paata Gugushvili, Nikoloz Koyava (in economics), Isidore Dolidze, Tinatin Tsereteli (law), David Lordkipanidze, Giorgi Tavzhishvili, Prokofi Janelidze (pedagogics), Avlip Zurabashvili (psychiatry) must be specially noted.

The Georgian school of mathematicians had worldwide recognition, especially the research work of Academicians Niko Muskhelishvili, Ilia Vekua, Victor Kupradze, and Shalva Mikeladze on the theory of resiliency, mathematical physics, approximate and numerical analysis.

A great scientific center of experimental physics — the Institute of Physics — was founded in Tbilisi in 1950. The scientists working there — Elepter Andronikashvili, Givi Khutsishvili, Jumber Lominadze and others — contributed a considerable share to the studies of cosmic rays, mastering the methods of using the atomic power for peaceful purposes, as well as creating and developing other trends of physics. Georgian scientists were involved in the activities of the well-known Soviet centers studying the cosmos. The result of this work was the launch into orbit of a cosmic reflector made by the constructor Elguja Medzmariashvili in July 1999.

Academician Evgeni Kharadze expended much energy on the development of astronomy. He was at the head of the Abastumani Astrophysics Observatory for over 50 years, where they successfully studied the construction of galaxy, the mechanics of the sky, the astronomy of stars, the physics of the sun, and the problems of theoretical astronomy. Georgian scientists discovered two comets, several asteroids new and super-new stars, studied hundreds of different stars, and introduced new measurements of distance between stars. E. Kharadze’s name was given to one of the asteroids.

The achievements of the Georgian school of geology, headed by Aleksandre Janelidze and Aleksandre Tvalchrelidze, were outstanding.

In the second half of the 1950s, new scientific-research establishments were added to the system of Georgia’s Academy of Sciences. These were as follows: the Institute of Inorganic and Electro-Chemistry, the Institutes of Paleontology, Manuscripts and Oriental Studies. The Scientific Agricultural Academy was founded. In 1960, the Institute of Cybernetics was established.

The sphere of research into the science, studying the earth, grew wider. Important monographs, such as *Georgia’s Soils*, *Georgia’s Climate*, *Georgia’s Geomorphology*, were published. Geobotanical, landscape and tectonic maps were drawn; *Georgia’s National Atlas* was published. New methods of physical-geographical and economic-geographical division into regions, of strengthening the seashores were worked out, deposits of oil, coal, ore, and minerals in Georgia were explored. Great attention was paid to studying the problems of cartography and geography. Plants were studied bio-chemically



and important collective works such as *The Dendroflora of the Caucasus*, Georgia's *Flora* and others were prepared and published.

The successful branches of agricultural sciences were as follows: soil science (G. Sabashvili), viticulture and forestry (V. Gulisashvili), subtropical cultures, tea-growing (M. Dalakishvili), and other spheres were awarded Stalin Prizes. An original tea-picking machine called "Sakartvelo" was introduced in 1967. New agricultural techniques for tea and subtropical plants were constructed with the participation of Georgian scientists and new selective, frost-resistant species with abundant crops were developed.

The branches of technical sciences reached new heights of development. These were machine-building, building mechanics and mountain mechanics, and later on electronics, electronic-computing machines, and telemechanics. Noteworthy results were received in the branches of applied mechanics, processes of management, metallurgy, modern chemistry, etc.

The achievements of the Georgian school of physiology, founded by Ivane Beritashvili, were continued by Academician Aleksandre Natishvili who was the first to begin research into the branch of experimental morphology, georgian school of biochemistry founded by Petre Kometiani was continued by his students.

The theoretical and practical medicine made progress. New medicines came into use. Nikoloz Antelava, Konstantine Eristavi, Egnate Pipia, Konstantine Chachava, Otar Gudushauri became famous as medical men and scientists.

Great attention was paid to the development of science in Georgia's autonomous areas as well. Interesting work was conducted in D. Gulia Language, Literature and History Institute of Georgia's Academy of Sciences in Abkhazia, in Batumi N. Berdzenishvili and South Ossetian scientific-research institutes.

Many achievements of science and technique were introduced into people's economy, but overall the results in the realities of the Soviet system were rather poor.

Literature

Post-war Georgian literature was characterized by the variety of its themes and genres and by its search for new forms of expression. The Soviet government still demanded that writers follow the principles of the socialist realism. The writers' duty was to raise up the younger generation — the masses — in the spirit of communism. They were responsible for taking an active part in inculcating new ways of life. The struggle for "ideological purity" and permeating literature with the party spirit still defined the limits of writing.

In spite of such bonds, almost all the genres of the Georgian literature were developing. Epic poetry, lyrics, and drama reached new heights. The representatives of the older literary generation continued active creative work as new creative forces appeared in the literary arena.

Georgian prose achieved brilliant success. It became enriched in the 1950s by works written on the subject of the war. These were Leo Kiacheli's *A Man from the Mountains*, Revaz Japaridze's *The Soldier's Widow*, and Konstantine Lordkipanidze's *A Stone of Wishing*. The reality of those days was artistically depicted in Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's *The Blossoming of the Vine*, Akaki Beliashvili's *Vepkhia Khalibauri*, Otar Chkheidze's



The Dyke, Demna Shengelaya's *Treasure*, as well as other works by Tina Donzhashvili, Giorgi Shatberashvili, Giorgi Natroshvili, and others.

The process of "thawing," begun in the Soviet Union after J. Stalin's death had its impact on literature as well. Writers repressed and banned in the 1930s such as Mikheil Javakhishvili, Titsian Tabidze, and Paolo Iashvili, and others were rehabilitated and their literary works were published again.

The Georgian historical novel enjoyed a special popularity. Readers became fond of Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's tetralogy *David the Builder*, Levan Gotua's *The Heroes' Sorrow*, and Grigol Abashidze's *Lasharela*. Books reflecting the past life of the Georgian people served the purpose of strengthening the national consciousness of people such as Levan Sanikidze's *Sheathless Swords*, Vakhtang Chelidze's *The Chronicles of the History of Kartli*, etc. A new genre appeared in the Georgian literature: the biographical novel. Such an interesting work as Levan Asatiani's *Akaki Tsereteli's Life* was written. Vakhtang Chelidze's *Ivane Machabeli*, Elguja Magradze's *Grigol Orbeliani*, Mihkeil Kveselava's *One Hundred and Fifty Days* and others belong to the same genre. From this point of view the work of the modern writer Rostom Chkheidze *The Fate of Pavle Ingorokva* is noteworthy.

Georgian short stories won fame. Their great progress is connected with the names of Sergo Kldiashvili, Guram Rcheulishvili, Nodar Dumbadze, Archil Sulakauri, Otia Ioseliani, Revaz Mishveladze and others.

A new galaxy of prose writers filled the ranks of the literary Parnassus in the post-war period. The treasury of Georgian literature was enriched and renovated by Nodar Dumbadze, Guram Rcheulishvili, Chabua Amirejibi, Otar Chkeidze, Archil Sulakauri, Revaz Inanishvili, Otar and Tamaz Chiladze, Guram Panjikidze, and others. Many of these authors became well-known worldwide for their literary creations. Nodar Dumbadze's *Grandmother*, *Iliko*, *Ilarion* and *I* is translated into many languages and published in many countries as are Chabua Amirejibis's *Data Tutashkhia*, and the works of Guram Panjikidze's and Otia Ioseliani.

Georgian poetry was permeated by the ideas of humanism, liberty, friendship among peoples, and modern reality. Many poets sang to the "new era" — the dawn of socialism in the USSR. Some had a sincere belief in what they wrote about, and some paid tribute by it to the existing regime to pave the way for their more real and valuable creative work.

The great Georgian poet Galaktion Tabidze continued his creative work in the 1950s as well. His masterpiece "Praise to Nikortsinda" was written in this period. Giorgi Leonidze, Ioseb Grishashvili, Simon Chikovani, and others were brilliant poets too.

The emptiness that had arisen after the years of cruelty, wrath, and hatred was filled by the lyrical poetry of the generation of gifted poets that appeared after World War II. Anna Kalandaze's refined verses, distinguished by their classical simplicity, bright and lucid images ("Beautiful Georgia", "Mulberry", etc.) became a comfort for a coarsened soul. Love for this country and great humane warmth is felt in the poetry of Ioseb Noneshvili and Murman Lebanidze. Many popular songs are written on the texts of their verses.

The works of Irakli Abashidze, Grigol Abashidze, Mukhran Machavariani, Shota Nishnianidze, Moris Potshkhishvili, Marika Baratashvili, Otar Chiladze, Jansug Charkviani, Otar Chelidze, Pridon Khalvashi and others raised Georgian poetry to greater heights.



A new generation of authors continues Georgian literary traditions. They are characterized by bold innovations; a great variety of artistic themes and images, by seeking interesting forms to express them (Goderdzi Chokheli, Aka Morchiladze, and David Magradze).

Georgian drama developed successfully. Polikarpe Kakabadze did much to develop this genre of literature. He wrote the plays – *Kvarkvare Tutaberi*, *Kakhaber's Sword*, and others. The playwrights Kita Buachidze, Nikoloz Nakhutsrishvili, Tamaz Chiladze, Rezo Gabriadze and others are the authors of the brilliant plays describing the historic past or the modern world.

The Abkhazians (Dimitri Gulia, Bagrat Shinkuba, Ivane Tarba) and the Ossets (Revaz Asaev, T. Gagloev) wrote noteworthy prosaic and poetic works. The same can be said about Russian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani poets, living in Georgia.

The best specimens of the world classical literature — Russian, Ukrainian and other peoples' of the Soviet Union — were translated into Georgian in the post-war years. In this respect the activities of Geronti Kikodze, Bachana Bregvadze, Jemal Abaishvili, Givi Shakhnazar, Giorgi Tserediani, and others are noteworthy.

The literary works of Georgian emigrant writers are worth mentioning specially, for instance Grigol Robakidze's works *The Killed Spirit*, etc.

Kartvelologists of foreign countries also did their best to make the Georgian language and literature popular. These were as follows: Rene Lafon and Bernard Utie (France), Julius Asphalg, Karl Schmidt, Gertrude Petch, Heinz Fenrich (Germany), Laiosh Tard (Hungary), Hugo Hupert, Robert Bleichsteiner (Austria), Luigi Magarotto (Italy), Kh. Kintana (Spain), Yaromir Yedelichka (Czechia), Ian Braun (Poland), Gerard Gurrut (Belgium), Robert Blake (USA), William Allen, David Marshall Lang (Great Britain), Ronald Syun, Steven Jones (USA). They devoted solid monographs to various issues of the Georgian history.

The magazine *Bedi Kartlisa* (*The Fate of Kartli*), founded in Paris by Nino and Kalistrate Salias, served the development of Kartvelology in Western Europe. A joint scientific journal of Tbilisi and Iena Universities Georgica in German has been published in the city of Iena since 1978. Giorgi Sharashidze founded a magazine *Revue des Etudes Georgiennes et Caucasiennes* in French in Paris together with the well-known French scholar George Dumesille.

From the point of view of international relations, the celebration of the 800th anniversary of Shota Rustaveli's birth was of great importance. It took place in 1966 and was marked by large-scale events. His immortal poem *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was translated and published in many languages. Many peoples of the world were given an opportunity to be better acquainted with the achievements of the Georgian culture. The celebration of the 1,500th anniversary of the creation of the first Georgian literary landmark *The Martyrdom of St. Shushanik* was also a noteworthy event.

Such literary publications as the magazines *Mnatobi* (*The Luminary*), *Tsiskari* (*The Dawn*), *Chveni Mtserloba* (*Our Literature*), and the newspaper *Literaturuli Sakartvelo* (*Literary Georgia*) greatly assisted the development of the Georgian literature.



Theater

The Shota Rustaveli and Kote Marjanishvili drama theatres stood in the vanguard of theatrical art. The post-war years in their lives were marked by new creative achievements. Well-known producers such as Dimitri Aleksidze and Mikheil Tumanishvili worked in the Rustaveli Theatre. Archil Chkhartishvili and Vaso Kushitashvili worked in the Marjanishvili Theatre. Great actors and actresses like Akaki Khorava, Akaki Vasadze, Vaso Godziashvili, Giorgi Shavgulidze, Veriko Anjaparidze and many others were the pride of these theaters.

The following generation of the Georgian producers and actors and actresses were no less successful. They made the Georgian theatre well known in the world.

The heroic and romantic trend in the theater was filled with a deep psychological trend in the 1950s and 1960s. The positive and negative sides of the contemporary life were shown on the stage. Plays were enriched by new aesthetics and variety of forms of expression.

The performances of Bertold Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *King Lear*, produced by Robert Sturua, the outstanding producer of the Rustaveli Theater, won worldwide recognition. Ramaz Chkhikvadze played the leading parts in all of them. The well-known actor presented Shakespeare's characters so well that the theater critics called R. Chkhikvadze "the Georgian Olivier".

The great achievements of the Georgian theater are also connected with the names of the producers Temur Chkheidze and Giga Lordkipanidze, the actresses Sesilia Takaishvili, Medea Chakhava, Sofiko Chiaureli, and the actors Akaki Kvantaliani, Erosi Manjgaladze, Gogi Gegechkori, Irakli Uchaneishvili, Otar Megvinetukhutsesi, Givi Berikashvili, Kakhi Kavsadze and others.

Vigorous creative work was done in Georgia's other theaters as well, among them in Kutaisi, Batumi, Akhaltsikhe, Rustavi, and Telavi. In Sukhumi there was an Abkhazian company besides a Georgian one. In Tskhinvali, there was an Ossetian company. On their basis Abkhazian and Ossetian theaters were established.

The theater of musical comedy, a puppet theater, a theater for children, and a theater of miniatures developed successfully in Georgia. In 1976 Amiran Shalikashvili founded a pantomime theater and Rezo Gabriadze set up a marionette theater.

Theater critics played a great part in the development of Georgian drama (Dimitri Janelidze, Natela Urushadze, Akaki Bakradze, Nodar Gurabanidze, Vasil Kiknadze and others).

Music and choreography

The rich stock of Georgian folk songs and the traditions of the national classical music remained the basis of the development of Georgian musical culture. Herewith, the process of introducing the achievements of the contemporary world music, the mastering of its main genres, and inculcating them on the national grounds was going on.

A whole galaxy of gifted composers appeared during the post-war years. The development and considerable success in the art of music is connected with their names.



A rise in professional level and skill was noticeable in many genres of music. New artistic methods were mastered, the peculiarities of rhythm generalized, and other creative processes went on.

The operas of Shalva Mshvelidze, Archil Kereselidze, David Toradze, Otar Taktakishvili and Revaz Lagidze were successfully staged at Tbilisi Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre. The names of the virtuoso conductors Odissey Dimitriadis, Vakhtang Paliashvili, Jansug Kakhidze, of brilliant singers David Gamrekeli, David and Nodar Andguladzes, Petre and Medea Amiranashvili, Zurab Anjaparidze, Tsisana Tatishvili, Lamara Chkonia, Makvala Kasrashvili, Zurab Sotkilava and others are the treasures of Georgian musical art.

The famous singer Paata Burchuladze (bass) has gained a particular recognition. He gives concerts both in his native country and abroad. P. Burchuladze worked and works with the greatest conductors of the world (Herbert von Karayan, Claudio Abado, Lory Maasel) and sings at such famous opera houses as the Milan's La Scala, the London's Covent Garden, the New-York Metropolitan Opera and so on.

Georgian singers Lado Ataneli, Badri Maisuradze, Tamar Javakhsishvili, Nino Surguladze, and others are working successfully in the leading opera houses of the world today.

Many noteworthy works of symphony music were created in the 1950s and 1960s. Among them the symphonies, piano concertos, cantatas and oratorios of Aleks Machavariani, Shalva Mshvelidze, Andria Balanchivadze, Otar Taktakishvili, Sul Khan Tsintsadze and others.

Composer Sul Khan Tsintsadze's share in the development of the Georgian chamber music is great. Shota Milorava, Giorgi Tsabadze, Shalva Azmaiparashvili and others made names for themselves in the genre of the musical comedy. The songs and the music written for films by Revaz Gabizhvadze, Bidzina Kvernadze, and Vazha Azarashvili were great successes.

Great international recognition for Georgian musicians was gained by the composer Gia Kancheli, the violinists Marine Iashvili, Liana Isakadze, the pianists Eliso Virsaladze, Marine Mdivani, Lekso Toradze, Aleksandre Korsantia and the pop-singer Ketik Melua.

Instrumental (Nodar Mamisashvili, Nodar Gabunia), children's (Vano Gokieli, Meri Davitashvili), and variety music (Giorgi Tsabadze, Vazha Azarashvili) reached new heights. Revaz Lagidze's song "Tbilisi" became a national hymn.

The vocal-instrumental ensembles *Orera* (soloist Nani Bregvadze), *Dielo*, *Iveria*, the girls' group *Mziuri* and others were very popular both in Georgia and beyond its borders.

The vocal ensemble *Rustavi* (leader Anzor Erkomaishvili, soloist Hamlet Gonashvili) acquainted the world public with the Georgian polyphonic folk song, considered a masterpiece of musical thinking by UNESCO.

The Georgian folk song "Chakrulo" (sung by Ilia Zakaidze and Rostom Saginashvili) was sent by Americans into space together with several other musical masterpieces.

In the years after World War II, the ballet began to develop. Original ballets were created by Shalva Mshvelidze, David Toradze, and Aleks Machavariani. They were staged by Vakhtang Chabukiani. Vakhtang Chabukiani is considered the founder of the Georgian ballet. He was awarded the highest Soviet prize, the Lenin Prize for staging the ballet *Othello* and performing the main part in it. The representatives of the national ballet, famous dancers Vera Tsignadze, Irine Aleksidze, Zurab Kikaleishvili, ballet-master



Giorgi Aleksidze and others did their best to develop the Georgian ballet. The Georgian emigrant Eter Pagava danced in the national ballet of the Amsterdam Opera Theater as the prima ballerina.

Nino Ananiashvili has made a name for Georgian ballet in the world. She was a leading ballerina of the Moscow's Bolshoi Theater for years. She has won many international contests and "grand-prix". Nino Ananiashvili was specially invited to dance leading parts on the ballet stages of England, France, Japan, USA, and other countries.

Georgian choreography and performing art were at the height of their glory. The Georgian Dance and Song Ensemble headed by Anzor Kavsadze was one of the distinguished ones. The State Ensemble of Dance headed by Nino Ramishvili and Iliko Sukhishvili was a tremendous success in many countries abroad and the foreign press called these dancers "the eighth wonder of the world".

Georgia's academic ensembles of folk song and dance *Erissioni* (headed by Anzor Chkuaseli and choreographer Rezo Chanishvili) and *Rustavi* (headed by Anzor Erkomaishvili, choreographer Rezo Chokhonelidze, and later Pridon Sulaberidze) are great successes. The choreographer Jano Bagrationi, the dancers Pridon Sulaberidze, Iamze Dolaberidze, Latavra Pochiani and many others have played a great part in the development of the Georgian folk choreography.

Cinema

The Soviets paid special attention to the cinema, considering it a powerful weapon of communist propaganda, and lavishly financed the cinema industry. Herewith, this branch of art was subjected to strict regulation and ideological control. In spite of such restrictions, films of high artistic value and permeated with national spirit were shot in Georgia.

The work begun by the film directors of the older generation - Mikheil Chiaureli, Nikoloz Shengelaya, David Rondeli, Vakhtang Tabliashvili, Nikoloz Sanishvili, Siko Dolidze, etc. - was successfully continued and developed by Rezo Chkheidze, Tengiz Abuladze, Giorgi and Eldar Shengelayas, Otar Ioseliani, Mikheil Kobakhidze, Lana Gogoberidze, Nana Mchedlidze, and others. They began their creative work in the 1950s and 1960s.

Rezo Chkheidze and Tengiz Abuladze's joint film *Magdana's Donkey* was the first to be internationally recognized at 1956 Canne and Edinburgh festivals. Later on, these film directors created a whole epoch in the Georgian cinema and enriched the world treasury with such masterpieces as *The Soldier's Father* (R. Chkheidze, starring Sergo Zakariadze), *Entreaty*, *The Stone of Wishing*, *Repentance* (T. Abuladze).

Giorgi Shengelaya (*Pirosmani*, *The Vera District Melodies* - the first Georgian musical), Eldar Shengelaya (*An Extraordinary Exhibition*, *Blue Mountains*), Mikheil Kobakhidze, Lana Gogoberidze, Shota and Nodar Managadze, Merab Kokochashvili and others played a great part in the development of the Georgian cinema art.

The films of director Otar Ioseliani must be mentioned separately (*November - the Month of St. George*, *Pastoral*, *Once There Was a Singing Blackbird*). These films exposed the vices of the Soviet political regime and criticized the negative sides of the life in the country. He emigrated to France and there his talent became more brilliant. The



Georgian artist is considered to be one of the outstanding contemporary directors (*The Favorites of the Moon, And There Was Light*).

The Georgian cinema art of the Soviet period reached such worldwide recognition that the international cinema critics began to speak about the phenomenon of "the Georgian cinema".

In 1956, Georgian Television started broadcasting. In 1968 a studio making television films was set up. Here noteworthy short films were made (*A Pitcher* by Irakli Kvirikadze, Guram Pataraya's *Record*), and television series (Soso Chkhaidze's *The Tushi Sheep-Breeder*, Giga Lordkipanidze's *Data Tutashkhia*, consisting of seven episodes, Rezo Chkhaidze's *Don Quixote* – nine episodes, etc.) were made.

The production of animated cartoons developed widely too. A. Khintibidze, V. Bakhtadze did fruitful work in this sphere.

Georgian documentary cinema developed into an independent genre. The achievements in this branch of cinematography are connected with the names of Giorgi Asatiani, Rezo Tabukashvili, Guram Pataraya, Gia Chubabria, and others. Rezo Tabukashvili dedicated a whole cycle of films to Georgia's cultural heritage scattered in foreign countries, immortalizing the deeds of our compatriots in emigration (*A Bright Trace, Georgia's Treasurer*).

The success and popularity of the Georgian cinema was due to the impressive acting of the actors and actresses such as Sergo Zakariadze, Veriko Anjaparidze, Sesilia Takaishvili, Sandro Zhorzholiani, Akaki Kvantaliani, Ipolite Khvichia, Lia Eliava, Otar Koberidze, Medea Japaridze, Dodo Abashidze, Otar Megvinetukhutsesi and others. The artistic scripts of Suliko Zhgenti, Rezo Gabriadze, Erlom Akhvlediani, Rezo Tcheishvili and others, the refined professionalism of the cinematographers – Lomer Akhvlediani, Irakli Onopriashvili and others aided the success of Georgian cinema.

The retrospective demonstration and festivals of the Georgian films were successfully held in England (1976), the USA (1977) and Germany (1978).

Fine Arts

The general development of Georgian culture in the 1950s and 1960s was followed by the development of architecture. The attitude of the Soviet government towards architecture was as follows: unnecessary ornamentation was to be eliminated. This restricted the architects' creative spirit. Construction projects (especially those connected with residential districts) were carried out according to typical, similar projects; the buildings were all alike and ugly. In spite of this, buildings distinguished by their architecture were erected, among them the Tbilisi Palace of Sports (architects Vladimir Aleks-i-Meskishvili and Ioseb Kasradze), the Hotel Iveria (architect Otar Kalandarishvili), the building of Georgia's Philharmonic Society (architect Ivane Chkhenkeli), the stations of the Tbilisi underground railway, etc.

In 1957, a road in Varazi Ravine was built and the following year a road connecting Vake and Saburtalo districts was constructed. Saburtalo and Digomi residential districts were built. In 1976, the first 14-storied apartment house was built. In 1972 the 274-meter-high television mast was erected on Mtatsminda (Holy Mountain).

Producers, actors and actresses of the Georgian theater



Kote Marjanishvili



Robert Sturua



Temur Chkheidze



Akaki Khorava



Veriko Anjaparidze



Ramaz Chkhikvadze

Georgian art workers



Vakhtang Chabukiani



Nino Ananiashvili



Zurab Sotkilava



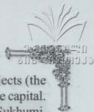
Paata Burchuladze



Nino Surguladze



Keti Melua



Architects Archil and Giorgi Kurdianis created interesting architectural projects (the renewed Dynamo Stadium). Shota Kavlashvili reconstructed the old districts of the capital. Noteworthy landmarks of Georgian architecture were created in Kutaisi, Batumi, Sukhumi, and other towns.

Economic development, the liberalization of social life, and the weakening of repressions in the post-war years created better conditions for the development of fine arts too.

One could notice the broadening of themes, diversity of style and manner, the mastering of new branches, and the seeking of new forms. Personal exhibitions of painters were held regularly since 1946. A permanent exposition of Georgian fine arts was opened in the state museum of arts in Tbilisi in 1952.

The genre of landscape painting developed successfully (David Kakabadze, Aleksandre Tsimakuridze), so did the genre of still life. Impressive portrait canvases were created by Ketevan Magalashvili, Ucha Japaridze, Irakli Toidze, Korneli Sanadze and so on, also by the painters of the following generation: Avto Varazi, Zurab Nizharadze, Giorgi Totibadze, Koki Makharadze, Irakli Parjiani, etc.

Elene Akhvlediani's creative work is characterized by an original manner. It is colorful and decorative. Lado Gudiashvili's paintings are distinguished by a distinct individual style, by the diversity of themes. They are done with exquisite artistic skill. The theme of Tengiz Mirzashvili's laconic compositions was the unique character of Georgia's mountainous districts (Tusheti, Svaneti), their nature and life. The painters Ekaterine Bagdavadze and Natela Yankoshvili created the paintings depicting Georgia's past and many generalized portraits of women. Dimitri Eristavi gives a poetic picture of the scenes of everyday life of our city.

The increase in construction in the country assisted the development of the monumental decorative art. Robert Sturua, Nikoloz Ignatov, Elguja Berdzenishvili and others worked in this genre. Painters Zurab Nizharadze and Gogi Totibadze made names for themselves in easel painting.

Book drawing had a leading part among the branches of drawing. Sergo Kobuladze, Tamar Abakelia, Levan Tsutskiride, Tengiz Samsonadze, Giorgi Ochauri, and others played a considerable part in the development of book illustrating. The branch of satirical drawing was represented by Gigla Pirtskhalava, Jemal Lolua, and Nodar Malazonia. Their works were very popular.

The artists Simon Virsaladze, Elene Akhvlediani, Parnaoz Lapiashvili, Ioseb Sumbatashvili, Teimuraz Murvanidze, Giorgi Kochakidze, and others played an important part in the development of the theater-decorating art. They designed performances at the theaters of foreign countries as well.

The Georgian painter Felix Varlamishvili ("Varla") is worth special mentioning. He worked abroad. The sculptor and goldsmith Elguja Amashukeli ("Guji") also deserves special mentioning. He also lived and worked abroad. "Varla's" works are kept in many museums of the world. As for "Guji", his adornments, which are often exhibited in well-known galleries and salons of foreign countries, enrapture those who see them.

The restoration of old Georgian chasing art was very important. This fact is closely connected with the names of Irakli Ochauri and Koba Guruli.

The monumental sculpture reached the heights of its development. In 1958, Elguja Amashukeli created the sculpture "Mother of Kartli" which became the symbol of Tbilisi.



Among the other creations of this well-known artist a monument to Vakhtang Gorgasali, "The Tiger and the Youth", "The Bell of Knowledge" (in Tbilisi) the monument to David the Builder (in Kutaisi,) and others are noteworthy.

Tbilisi is decorated by many stone and bronze monuments, e.g. "Shota Rustaveli" (sculptor Konstantine Merabishvili), "Ilia and Akaki" (sculptors Valentin Topuridze and Shota Mikatadze), "Vazha-Pshavela" (sculptor Giorgi Ochiauri), "David Guramishvili" (sculptor Merab Berdzenishvili). Merab Berdzenishvili is one of the most outstanding sculptors of our times. He gained a general recognition by his sculptures "They will be born again" (Manglisi), the monument to David the Builder (Tbilisi), "Medea" (Poti), the memorial to Didgori battle, etc.

The monument to Erekle II (in Telavi), monuments to Petre Bagrationi (in Tbilisi and Moscow) are made by Merab Merabishvili. The monument to Galaktion Tabidze in Kutaisi is sculptured by Giorgi Shkhvatsabaya; "The Torch of Peace" erected in one of the streets in the historic Olympia of Greece was also his creation.

The sculptural works of a well-known monumentalist Zurab Tsereteli were erected in the cities of Russia, Brazil, Great Britain, the USA, France, Japan and other countries

Sport

The development of national kinds of sports – Georgian wrestling, *lelo* (a kind of ball-game), *isindi* (a competition in horsemanship), *kabakhi* (a competition in marksmanship), polo, etc. has had a long tradition. In the 1920s and 1930s many kinds of professional sport began developing in the country. They reached particular heights in the post-war period. The material base of sports became stronger in various towns. New sports buildings were built, among them stadiums, gymnasiums, tennis courts, swimming pools, etc. Sport, as well as culture, was one of the main ways of national self-expression, and Georgia achieved considerable success in this respect.

The so-called union republics that were part of the USSR, Georgia among them, did not have the right to take part in international competitions independently. Georgian sportsmen participated in European and world championships and Olympic Games under the Soviet flag. Herewith, their number in the Union national teams was usually limited, for as a rule the sportsmen of Russian nationality had priority. In spite of this, the role of Georgians in the achievements of the Soviet Union in sports is quite impressive. In 1952 in the Helsinki Olympic Games, which were the first Olympic Games in which the Soviet Union took part, the Georgian sportsmen won three gold, three silver, and two bronze medals. Georgian Olympians, as part of the Soviet national team, won over 100 medals, among them 33 gold ones. Viktor Saneev became an Olympic champion three times (long jump), Levan Tediashvili – twice (free-style wrestling), Nino Salukvadze (marksmanship). She took part in this sports forum five times and won gold, silver and bronze medals.

Georgian sportsmen have the highest Olympic prizes in the following kinds of sports: gymnastics (Mzia Jugeli), the high jump (Robert Shavlakadze), archery (Ketevan Losaberidze), fencing (Nugzar Asatiani), judo (Shota Chochishvili, Shota Khabareli, Zurab Zviadauri and others), wrestling (Vakhtang Balavadze, Givi Kartoziya, Roman Rurua, etc.), weightlifting (Rafael Chimiskhian, Kakhi Kakhiaishvili, Giorgi Asanidze), basketball (Zurab Sakandelidze, Mikheil Korkia), handball (Aleksandr Anpilogov), football (Gela Ketashvili).



Rezo Chkheidze



Tengiz Abuladze



Otar Ioseliani



Nato Vachnadze



Medea Japaridze



Sofiko Chiaureli



Sergo Zakariadze

Georgian sportsmen

საქართველოს
სპორტის
მინისტროს
განცხადებით



Nona Gaprindashvili



Viktor Saneev



Levan Tediashvili



Tbilisi "Dynamo", 1981



Giorgi Asanidze



Georgia's national rugby team



Football was the most popular sport in Georgia. The football sport club "Dynamo" took part in Union championships from 1936. It won the title of the USSR champion twice, in 1964, and in 1978, it also won the USSR cup in football twice, and in 1981 it became the owner of the European cup. In different years different splendid footballers played in this team – Boris Paichadze, Avtandil Gogoberidze, Shota Iamanidze, Mikheil Meskhi, Slava Metreveli, Murtaz Khurtsilava, Revaz Dzodzuashvili, Kakhi Asatiani, Manuchar Machaidze, David Kipiani, Aleksandre Chivadze, Osset (Guram Tskhovrebov, Zaur Kaloev, Vladimir Gutsaev) and Abkhaz (Boris Dziapshpa, Vitali Daraselia, Grigol Tsava) footballers played successfully together with Georgian footballers. Well-known trainers Andro Zhordania, Gavril Kachalin and Nodar Akhalkatsi played a great part in the achievements of the Georgian football.

Several Georgian footballers play in the leading football clubs of England, Germany, Italy and other countries. Kakhi Kaladze is distinguished among them. He twice became the winner of the UEFA Champion League, playing in "the Milan" of Milan. A well-known footballer in the past, Revaz Dzodzuashvili, was the trainer of the Lithuanian National Team, and the Georgian specialist of football – Temur Ketsbaya – does successful training work in Cyprus.

The achievements of the Tbilisi basketball team "Dynamo" were remarkable too. It became the Union champion four times, and in 1962, it won Europe's cup as well. The achievements of the Georgian basketball are connected with the names of Otar and Mikheil Korkias, Nodar Jorjikia, Guram Minashvili, Levan Mosashvili, Zurab Sakandelidze, Nikolai Deryugin and others.

The Georgian basketball school has produced Vladimir Stephania, Nikoloz Tskitishvili and Zaza Pachulia who play in the teams of the National Basketball Association of the USA (NBA) today.

The handball team that was distinguished among the Union teams was Tbilisi "Karishkhala" ("Stormy petrel") in which Jemal Tsertsvadze, Anzor Ekseulidze, Aleksander Anpilogov and others played.

The Georgian water-polo players – Givi Chikvanaya, Leri Gogoladze, Nodar Gvakharia, Vladimir Iselidze played an important part in the development of this sport. Omar Pkhakadze was an Olympic bronze medal winner and world champion in sprint cycling and was considered one of the strongest sprinters of the planet.

Chess made Georgia well known in the world. Grand masters – Nona Gaprindashvili, Maya Chiburdanidze, Nana Aleksandria, Nana Ioseliani, Nino Gurieli, Ketevan Arakhamia, and others made the Georgian chess school well known in the world. Nona Gaprindashvili, was the world champion five times running (1962-1978). She was the first woman chess-player who was given the title of an international grand master among men. Also Nona Gaprindashvili was awarded the first "Chess Oscar". Maya Chiburdanidze was a world champion in chess five times too.

In 1980-1982, the USSR women's Olympic team of chess consisted of the Georgian chess-players (Maya Chiburdanidze, Nona Gaprindashvili, Nana Aleksandria, Nana Ioseliani). They showed the best results. The team of Georgian women has won the title of Olympic champions in chess several times in the name of Georgia too. It last happened in 2008.



The Georgian men chess players were also successful at many international tournaments. Among them grand masters Bukhuti Gurgeniძე, Eduard Guffeld, Tengiz Giorgadze, Zurab Azmaiparashvili are worth mentioning.

The Georgian tennis player Aleksandre Metreveli participated in the 1973 Wimbledon finals. Lela Meskhi, an Olympic bronze medal winner, was among the twenty best tennis players of the world.

The Georgian school of wrestlers is well known in the world. Its representatives of free style, Greco-Roman wrestling and judo have won the titles of Olympic, world and European champions many times. Levan Tediashvili has no equal in the number of prizes he won. He has been the champion of Europe three times. Leri Khabelov won Olympic gold and silver medals, five gold medals of the world champion and four gold medals of the champion of Europe. David Gobejishvili won gold and bronze Olympic medals. He was also the winner of the world championship twice and once of the European championship. Roman Rurua was the world champion four times and was the winner of the Olympic Games in Mexico; he was the second in Tokyo, etc.

Georgian rugby players have reached a considerable success in recent years. Georgia's national team of rugby players won the cup of European nations in 2001, and the following year took part in the finals of the world cup. Many Georgian rugby players play successfully in successful foreign (especially French) teams.

The post-war period was marked by considerable achievements in mountaineering. Giorgi Nikoladze is a founder of Georgian mountaineering. He arranged the first expeditions to Mkinvartsveri (Kazbek) and Elbrus as early as in 1923-1925. The Georgian mountain-climbers – Otar Gigineishvili, Mikheil Khergiani, Jumber Medzmariashvili and others conquered many summits of the Pamir and Tien-Shan. The mountaineer Mikheil Khergiani, nicknamed "the tiger of rocks", won worldwide recognition.

In 1999 the Georgian mountain-climbers' expedition, consisting of Beno Kashakashvili and Bidzina Gujabadze, conquered the highest summit of the world — Everest. Another group of Georgian mountain-climbers (Gia Tortladze, Irakli Ugulava) also succeeded in conquering Chomo-lungma.

Georgia at the Junction of the 20th and 21st Centuries

The social-economic situation

Georgia's evolution into an independent state encountered serious problems after the disintegration of the USSR. The process started under complicated conditions at home and abroad. Political instability, growing unemployment, the shattered system of social welfare, was a serious test not only for the government, but also for the population of the country who had chosen the road of freedom and independence without the hope of assistance from abroad. The social-economic development of the newly restored state did not march in step with the dynamics of its political transformation.



The economic stagnation that had begun in the last years of the Soviet Empire turned into a long-term crisis in Georgia and almost caused a complete collapse. Living standards fell sharply. For some time the population managed to exist on their savings, but soon this resource was exhausted and the majority of the population found themselves below the limits of poverty. Several thousands of refugees driven out of South Ossetia and Abkhazia aggravated the critical social background even more. Providing them with lodgings was an additional challenge for a state in the process of formation.

In spite of many hardships, the country was changing. Collective and Soviet farms were finally abolished. The privatization of land in villages and housing in towns and cities was carried out. Over 627,000 households in villages were given land as their personal property free of charge. The inhabitants of towns and cities became permanent owners of the apartments they had been tenants of up to that time. State and municipal property was privatized through vouchers. Alongside the distribution of the property, the social structure of the society underwent some changes. The social strata of peasants having some property, of small and medium businessmen, and also well-to-do businessmen appeared. The peasants that owned property were unable to obtain or renew the necessary equipment to develop their economy, to use modern agro-technological facilities for that purpose, etc. A criminal environment, the unstable situation, a bad legislative base and a defective taxation system impeded the quick development of free enterprise and foreign investments in the country.

The energy crisis was the cause of many problems in Georgia. Due to the deficit of fuel and raw materials, the majority of industrial enterprises did not work. Many of them were looted and destroyed. Unemployment was not a surprising thing when the factories and plants did not work. The labor exchange was unable to provide applicants with work. Specialists and workers lost their qualifications.

The situation in the village economy became critical too. The amount of ploughed and sown land diminished and the crops produced per hectare became less. Before, the consumers of Georgian tea, citrus, and fruit had been Russia and other soviet republics. Now, that market was practically closed for the Georgian products and the demand dropped sharply. The development of viticulture and the production of wine were in danger.

The population was dealt a severe blow by the devaluation of the Soviet rouble. In April 1993, Georgia introduced its own money — a coupon — but it was soon devaluated as well. The growing inflation and the corruption raging among the state officials created critical problems for the state budget.

The financing of such spheres as health care, education, science, culture and sport was extremely diminished. The salary of the people employed in these branches was mostly of a symbolic nature. The significant part of Georgia's population existed on humanitarian aid sent by foreign countries and international organizations. Migration abroad and the death rate grew, the process of depopulation started. According to unofficial information about a million people left the country. According to statistics, 41,300 people died in Georgia in 2000 while the number of newborn children was not more than 40,400.

Georgia's government started to carry out economic reforms once the civil war was over. In the first place, prices of bread were made free and attention was paid to putting in order the monetary and credit system. The new national currency, the Georgian Lari, has been in circulation since 1995.



Changes planned in the area of finances were supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. With their help, a long-term program of macro-economic stabilization was planned out and began to operate. The financial program was successful. The bank business was put in order too. The network of banks based on foreign capital developed. Investments appeared in Georgia's economy as well. While the foreign investments brought into the country in 1997 amounted to 86,439,000 Lari, this figure reached half a million Lari in 1998.

Some economic projects were less effective, but many of them were successful. The idea of restoring the old "Silk road" also had positive results. The Transcaucasia transport corridor began to function via Georgia with the assistance of a special program of the European Commission called "Traseca". It transports goods from Asia to Europe and vice versa by the shortest route. The Baku-Supsa and Baku-Tbilisi-Jeikhan oil-pipe-line international projects have good prospects as well. Alongside their economic significance, the oil pipelines are considered an additional guarantee of security in the region.

Various branches of village economy and industry gradually began to revive. Several successful firms and companies were established. Trade had more opportunities, and the tempo of economic development became noticeable. The salaries of the employed both in state and private enterprises were raised and pensions increased. A number of social programs are carried out, but prices also rise quickly. The living standard of the population is still low and is far behind the average European index.

Political reality

The military and state councils established after the overthrow of President Zviad Gamsakhurdia's government were illegitimate bodies. Having arrived in Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze tried to make the political process constitutional. Elections to the parliament were scheduled for October 11, 1992.

In spite of the war being waged in the country, the economically indigent population was looking forward to the elections, hoping that they would improve the situation. The activity of the electorate was high: 74.34% of the population who had the right to vote came to the polling stations. The majority of the population of Abkhazia and South Ossetia also took part in the elections.

The elections to the supreme legislative body were conducted according to the system that allowed almost all the political parties of the country to participate in them and become members of the parliament. The representatives of 32 parties and four political blocs of the 47 electoral subjects were elected deputies. The electoral blocs "Peace" (29 seats), "11th October" (18 seats), "Unity", the National-Democratic Party, "the Greens", etc. were among the winners. At the same time the electors were to elect the chairman of the parliament by a direct vote. Only one candidate – Eduard Shevardnadze – was nominated for this post. He enjoyed the greatest confidence of the people and got 95.9% of votes.

At one of the first sittings of the Parliament Eduard Shevardnadze was given the title of the Head of the State. Vakhtang Goguadze was elected speaker of the Parliament. A new government was also formed, headed by the Prime Minister Tengiz Sigua.



The first parliament of Georgia was distinguished by its mixed character. Eduard Shevardnadze did not have a distinct majority in it. The opposition often defended their own goals, but their criticism was quite harsh. The government was attacked for its being too complaisant and conducting a passive policy concerning Russia. Besides, they criticized it for joining the ranks of the CIS.

In September 1993, Eduard Shevardnadze announced his resignation. The opposition was not brave enough to take advantage of this and preferred to retreat. The parliament, almost unanimously, was for Eduard Shevardnadze retaining the post.

In the autumn of 1993, a new political party headed by Shevardnadze was established. It was called "the Citizens' Union". It later on became the ruling party of the State. Besides the political opposition, certain forces (illegal formations, criminal bands, etc.) used arms with the purpose of getting hold of power, authority, and property in Georgia. In 1994 Georgia's former minister of defense G. Karkarashvili was badly wounded, and the leader of the National Democratic Party G. Chanturia was killed. The same fate was shared by the president of Shevardnadze's foundation, the deputy minister of defense, and others. All these were results of acts of terrorism. Such acts were organized twice against Eduard Shevardnadze too, but he survived. Having solidified his position in the country, Shevardnadze opposed the violence raging in the country. The former members of the Military Council-Tengiz Kitovani and Jaba Ioseliani were arrested and the "Mkhedrioni" was disarmed. Gradually the syndrome of the "armed man" was eliminated and the criminalization of politics was put an end to as well.

The Constitution asserts that the source of power in Georgia is people and the principle of the distribution of power is in force, the state recognizes and protects the universally acknowledged human rights and freedoms. According to the Constitution, the territory of Georgia was defined by the borders existing on December 21, 1991 (as it was after the disintegration of the USSR). The institution of the presidency was restored in Georgia. The president is the head of state and executive power. The parliament, being the country's supreme representative body, realizes legislative power and defines the main trends of domestic and foreign policy.

The Constitution also established in Georgia the following democratic institutes – the Constitutional Court and the ombudsman.

A special article (Article 9) of the Constitution was dedicated to emphasizing the particular role of the Georgian Orthodox Christian Church in the history of Georgia. Later, in 2002, a constitutional agreement was signed by the state and the Apostolic Orthodox Christian Church and ratified by the Parliament.

Based on the new constitution, new parliamentary and presidential elections were held on November 5, 1995. Eduard Shevardnadze became president. He received four times more votes than his main adversary, Jumber Patiasvili. It was also Shevardnadze's Party that won a victory in the parliamentary race. The National-Democratic Party (I. Sarishvili) and the All-Georgian Restoration Union (A. Abashidze) were the second. General Secretary of the Citizens' Union - Zurab Zhvania - was elected chairman of the parliament.

The Citizens' Union was the winner of the 1999 parliamentary elections as well, and Zurab Zhvania retained the post of the chairperson. Shevardnadze was also a winner in the elections of April 2000. He was again elected president of Georgia.



During his presidency, Eduard Shevardnadze assisted the establishment of the market economy, abolished capital punishment, made the media free, took steps towards European integration, established partnership between Georgia and western countries, etc. Herewith, Shevardnadze's government was unable to build a flexible state mechanism and to form real self-government; the same can be said about justice and the principles of equality. The energy crisis became a problem that was difficult to overcome. Poverty and unemployment were also permanent troubles. Many former "communist functionaries" of the Soviet period occupied high positions. Bribery and corruption flourished in governmental bodies.

The above-mentioned problems, against the background of a harsh social situation in the country, were the cause of a political crisis in the autumn of 2001. The relations between the legislative and executive bodies became especially strained. The younger wing of the Citizens' Union, consisting of Zurab Zhvania, chair of the Parliament, Mikheil Saakashvili, the leader of the majority, and others opposed Shevardnadze's regime. In November 2001 Zurab Zhvania left the speaker's post. His post was taken up by Nino Burjanadze.

Foreign policy

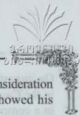
The question of the appearance of Georgia in the international arena had been on the agenda since the beginning of the 1990s. The main objective of Georgia's foreign policy after declaring the state independence was the recognition of the country de-jure. It was impossible to have normal diplomatic, trade, economic or cultural relations with foreign countries without it. Another significant aim was integrating into international world organizations and joining the common system of European security.

In the period of Zviad Gamsakhurdia's rule, which had lasted only fourteen months, the existence of the Soviet Union hindered recognition of Georgia's sovereignty. The USA and the entire western world still considered Georgia, as well as other Union republics (except the Baltic republics), to be part of the Soviet Empire. This was the reason they refrained from recognizing it.

After Eduard Shevardnadze became president, Georgia established diplomatic relations with more than eighty countries within about six months. Diplomatic missions were opened in a number of foreign countries. The USA, Germany, France, Russia, Ukraine and some other countries opened their embassies in Tbilisi. This achievement came about from several factors: the disintegration of the USSR, the confidence of the western political leaders in Eduard Shevardnadze, and Georgia's declaration that it had chosen the road of democracy, would protect human rights, and would build a liberal market economy.

The success of the recognition and acknowledgement process was obvious, but it was not sufficient for retaining freedom and future existence.

Because of its location, Georgia is a buffer country. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of a small state, having the function of a buffer, is always in a risky situation. The leaders of the country ought to have worked out the mechanism of a political strategy based on balanced, good-neighborly and friendly relations that would guarantee its peaceful and stable development.



Eduard Shevardnadze's foreign policy followed that direction. He took into consideration the interests of his powerful and aggressive neighbor in a certain way, but showed his wish to integrate into Euro-Atlantic structures.

The broken territorial integrity and frozen conflicts are considered one of the main threats to the country. This fact is connected with Russia to some extent. The real danger coming from the North made the rulers of Georgia seek ways of establishing closer relations with international organizations. On July 31, 1992, Georgia became a member of the United Nations' Organization. In the same year, Georgia joined the Council of the North Atlantic Cooperation, and in 1994 joined NATO's "Partnership for Peace" program. Soon Georgia made an official statement for entering NATO. According to the leaders of this organization and its member countries, the doors of the North-Atlantic Alliance are open for Georgia. The question of giving Georgia Membership Action Plan (MAP) is a matter of active discussion.

A special "Train and Equip" programme was conducted in Georgia with the assistance of the NATO. This programme serves the purpose of helping the Georgian army approach NATO standards. Georgia's military units take part in NATO's general military training and peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and Iraq.

The mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has been working in Georgia since 1992. It conducts the monitoring of the frontiers, participates in the question concerning the settling of conflicts, observes the transparency of the election process, etc. Georgia joined the OSCE in 1994. The resolution of this organization at the summit in Istanbul in 1999 was of great importance. According to it a concrete date (July of 2001) for the removal of Russian military bases from Georgia was set. Russia partially carried out the resolution of the summit and took several bases out at the appointed time, but it still occupies a base at Gudauta.

Since 1996, Georgia participated in the Parliamentary Assembly of Europe with the status of a guest, and on January 27, 1999, Georgia became a full and equal member of the European Council. The dreams of many generations of Georgians came true when Georgia was received in the family of Europe's civilized nations. The ways of further rapprochement to the European Council begin to show. The proof of this is "The agreement of partnership and cooperation" signed by the European Council and Georgia and the inclusion of Georgia into the "neighbourhood policy" of the European Union (ENP). In November 2006, "The working plan of the European neighbourhood policy for Georgia" came into force. It envisages the support of the democratic development in Georgia, bringing the legal system and legislation into harmony with those in Europe and the assistance in overcoming the problems that are still numerous in the Georgian state.

Georgia is a member of the following regional organizations: the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova's group of cooperation) and others. In 1993, after long debates the Parliament supported the idea of Georgia's entering the CIS. At that time, Shevardnadze connected this fact with "returning Abkhazia and returning to Abkhazia", but long experience assured the government and the political elite of the country that the CIS was a useless organization not only from this point of view, but also from the point of view of international cooperation. In September 2008, Georgia left the CIS.

The USA is a great supporter and strategic ally of Georgia; the partnership with this country is the most significant priority for the security and the foreign policy of the country.



On its part, the White House also considers Georgia to be its partner and the main country in the Caucasian region where democratic, market economy institutes were established in a comparatively short period, and where western values are gaining a foothold. The United States stands by Georgia's side, helps it financially, assists retaining peace and stability in the country, strengthen the ability of defense, build a civil society, etc.

The relations between Georgia and Ukraine, Georgia, and Turkey today are distinguished. Georgia has signed agreements with both countries, based on equal rights and partnerships, and both agreements have come into force. These agreements embrace political, economic, trade, cultural and other spheres.

The relations with Azerbaijan and Armenia are harmonious. Besides a long-term good-neighborly tradition with the countries of the Southern Caucasus, friendly relations with these countries are the result of the existence of numerous Azerbaijani and Armenian communities in Georgia. Georgia and Azerbaijan participate in joint energy, transport, and communication projects with international significance. The European market will receive Caspian energy resources via Georgia. The Baku-Tbilisi-Jeikhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum oil pipelines have been built and are functioning. The construction of a Yerevan-Batumi railway line that will connect Armenia with the Black Sea is actively discussed and planned today.

It is especially important for Georgia to be integrated into Europe and to find her place in the great family of civilized nations. The business relations established with Germany, France, Great Britain, the countries of Eastern Europe, Scandinavia and the Baltic, getting wider day-by-day, assist our progress in this direction.

Georgia's relations with Israel become better. New prospects of cooperation with Arab countries (the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait), the countries of Central Asia, China, Japan, etc. appear.

One major problem of Georgia's sovereign development is the normalization and establishment of neighborly relations with the Russian Federation. The settlement of this seemingly simple question is hindered by the incompatibility of Russia's and Georgia's geo-strategic interests. Russia's real aspirations in the Caucasus do not coincide with the existence of a free and powerful Georgia with its obvious western orientation. Moscow officially recognizes Georgia's independence and its territorial integrity, but in practice does not adhere to the norms and principles of legal relations. The double standard of the Kremlin, the clandestine and open support of the separatist regimes of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the actions of the RFR, violating the rights of sovereign Georgia, among them the appearance of Russia's military aircraft in Georgian airspace dropping bombs on the Georgian territory, etc. hampers the development of good relations between the two countries.

In 1994, an agreement was signed between the Republic of Georgia and the Russian Federation about "friendship, good neighborly relations and cooperation". The document that was to become a legal base of the Russian and Georgian relations was approved and ratified by the Parliament of Georgia, but Russia's State Council (the Duma) refrains from ratifying it. Eduard Shevardnadze attempted to restore the integrity of the country by means of earning "Moscow's goodwill" and close connections with Russia, but all was vain. The supreme power has changed in Russia and Georgia several times, but the relations of these two countries have not improved.



Today's Georgia, Achievements and Challenges

The 2003 "Revolution of Roses" in Georgia

A great majority of the Georgian population welcomed Eduard Shevardnadze's return to his native country in the spring of 1992. They hoped that he would change the situation for the better. They waited for these changes patiently.

Once the battles in Abkhazia stopped and the civil war over, the reform process started in Georgia. They were carried out in the justice, army, healthcare, and education systems. The changes were not characterized by radicalism and were mostly evolutionary in nature, but all they caused significant changes all the same. The essence of certain reforms was approved by the European experts, and some reforms were financed and monitored by donor organizations of foreign countries. All this produced a positive foundation considered a guarantee of success. Time passed and money was spent, but effective results were nowhere to be seen. The negative side of the changes was more visible: a great number of people dismissed from work and low wages, paid late or not at all. The enrichment of the persons occupying high positions including members of parliament, the officials of executive and law-enforcing bodies, the representatives of the military elite, customs and taxation officers became more and more noticeable, while a large part of the population became impoverished. The budget, scanty as it was, especially beginning with 1998, was not fulfilled regularly. Total corruption reigned in the country, the state treasury was robbed, and even foreign grants were not spent for their intended purposes. The government was even unable to pay pensions.

The ruling stratum, filled by former communist and komsomol nomenclatura workers, distinctly assumed the character of clans. The state apparatus became more and more bureaucratic. No progress was noticed in economics. The energy crisis was still unsolved. Public transport grew old, the roads in the provinces and villages deteriorated, a considerable part of the streets in Tbilisi and other towns became impassable, etc.

Prices of all kinds of goods rose day by day, and life became more expensive. New jobs did not appear. Being unemployed people, especially the youth, were compelled to leave the country and go abroad in search of work. The civilians driven out of the conflict zones (Abkhazia and the South Ossetian Region) were in an unbearable condition, having a very meager financial aid.

Alongside the hard social reality and the corruption of the governmental circles, the atmosphere of injustice, lack of discipline and impunity conditioned the growing discontent of the population.

The feeling of protest of the political opposition grew stronger due to the government's attitude towards elections. Many international observers attended elections in Georgia. Some violations that had taken place during the elections were mentioned in their accounts, but on the whole the elections were assessed positively. The oppositional parties doubted the correctness of these conclusions and thought that the government falsified the results of counting the votes. As for the government, they ignored this quite well-grounded accusation, and did not take the claims of the opposition into consideration.

The ruling force – the Citizens' Union had an absolute majority in the Parliament. They had a dominant position in all the local governmental and self-governmental bodies.





and "Burjanadze-Democrats" contested the decision of the Central Election Committee and appealed to their supporters for protest actions.

A great charge of discontent and irreconcilability with the existing situation had accumulated among the population. They expected the elections to bring the change of the existing regime and innovations in the life of the country. As for the government, they did not want to give up their positions, and they did not retreat. People went out into the streets as a sign of protest. The meetings and manifestations in which many thousands of people from all parts of Georgia participated lasted permanently for three weeks.

The Television company "Rustavi 2" played an important part in stirring up and organizing the disturbances. It turned into a mouthpiece of the camp opposed to the government. The youth organization "Kmara" ("Enough") was distinguished by its activities. There were some other non-governmental organizations etc. that were also active.

The protest movement was led by Mikheil Saakashvili, Zurab Zhvania and Nino Burjanadze. They had a great support of the democratic world, especially that of the USA administration.

On November 22, 2003 the first session of the new Parliament was to take place. Before Georgia's President opened the sitting the demonstrators, headed by M. Saakashvili, rushed into the hall. Many of them were holding roses in their hands. The demonstrators, whom the police did not resist, easily occupied the building of the Chancellery as well.

Ed. Shevardnadze was about to declare a state of emergency in the country, but the western states made it clear that he should not expect assistance from outside. The Kremlin and the commandment of the Russian troops, deployed in Tbilisi, restrained themselves from interfering in Georgia's internal affairs too. On November 23-rd Ed. Shevardnadze resigned from the president's post.

In Georgia the government was changed peacefully. It was given the name of "the Revolution of Roses". The attitude of the Georgian political elite towards the November events is not similar. The government that substituted Shevardnadze's regime calls them "a velvety revolution" which opened the way to a better future for the country. In the opinion of a number of oppositional parties it was a coup d'etat, with an active participation of foreign forces. Some of them even consider Shevardnadze to be participating in the "revolution". The latter passed his rights over to Saakashvili-Zhvania-Burjanadze team according to the "scenario written abroad".

The echo of the November 2003 is still heard in Georgia. The events of those days are a matter of discussion even today. More time is necessary for analyzing them thoroughly and assessing them correctly. But at this stage the following can be said: "the revolution of roses" is a variety of the so called "colored revolutions", worked out in the western intellectual centers. It appeared as the continuation of the movement, begun in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which in its turn became a source for "the new wave of freedom" in the post-soviet space.



The course of reforms

Edvard Shevardnadze having resigned from his post, the chairman of the Parliament Nino Burjanadze temporarily became an acting president in accordance to the constitutional procedures. New presidential elections were called in due time.

"The revolutionary bloc ("the National Movement" and "Burjanadze-Democrats") nominated M. Saakashvili as their candidate. His rating at that time was exceptionally high. In January 2004 M. Saakashvili became Georgia's democratically elected president by a landslide victory.

The elections of November 2nd, 2003 were annulled by the Constitutional Court. Only 75 deputies, elected by a majority vote, retained their plenary rights. The revolutionary euphoria was so high that "the National Movement" won the new parliamentary elections on March 28, 2004 without a problem and formed a constitutional majority in the supreme legislative body of the country. Nino Burjanadze was elected head of the Parliament. Zurab Zhvania became a minister of state.

A momentous constitutional change was effected in Georgia in February 2004. The model of the state formation was altered; a cabinet of ministers and a position of a prime-minister were introduced. The President was given the right to dismiss the Parliament, etc.

The new government, of young western educated, energetic but inexperienced ministers was swift to introduce revolutionary changes; With the promise of radical renewal of the failed and rampantly corrupt state system, a number of state regulatory bodies, being notoriously associated with corruption were annulled; Government was widely downsized; Several former ministers and other high ranking officials were arrested with corruption charges, and the significant number of old personnel were dismissed from work at once.

One of the first successful reforms was the total transformation of the police force. A new and efficient Patrol police was created instead of the corrupt road auto-inspection of the soviet times. Almost entire police force was fired and changed by new personnel picked through merit based selection, equipped with new cars, modern technology, good training and motivated by better salaries. A major healthcare breakthrough was achieved by establishing a free-of-charge ambulance and first medical aid service for all citizens of Georgia. With the eradication of corruption in tax collecting system raising pensions and salaries became possible. Alongside the increase of the state budget, programs of social assistance for the helpless population and those under poverty level were introduced. The 15-year-long energy-crisis was solved.

Decreasing taxes and adopting a new liberal tax code helped to jump-start the long ailing economy; wide-ranging economic reforms were implemented, spectacularly simplifying business startup and improving customs procedures; the number of licenses were slashed enormously. Rapid pace of reforms towards liberal and open economy generated a strong influx of foreign direct investments and earned Georgia a rank of world's top economic reformer for two years in a row by the World Bank. Aggressive privatization of state managed assets and companies generated additional sources of large revenues to the state budget; however, it often resulted in government's harsh criticism by the public and the opposition groups. By the year 2007 Georgia's annual economic growth rate reached double digits and was estimated as the world's fastest growing economy among non-oil countries by The Economist magazine.



The reformation of the army began. A disciplined, trained and properly equipped army was built. Fight against corruption and organized crime gained strength. Crime rate decreased significantly. The public transport was improved, the streets in the capital were put in order, new roads and sports playgrounds were built, the restoration of historic monuments started, protecting the cultural heritage and its maintenance got more attention then ever before. Cities and towns were lit up and beautification works started for the first time in decades. The country's worn-out and destroyed infrastructure was completely rehabilitated with hundreds of millions invested in constructing new roads and highways, new electric transmission lines and water supply systems. After decades of halt, gasification of Georgian cities and villages started again.

The reform of education had the greatest resonance among the public. Like most of the other reforms, it was also carried out by the means of a revolutionary and uncompromising methods. The teaching programs and text-books of schools, and universities were modernized, the old corrupt system of admissions in higher educational facilities was totally reformed as the unified national entrance exams were established; providing ground for cleaning the admission process from corruption thus allowing the talented to get higher education without having to pay bribes. Computerization and renovation of schools around the country begun and the accreditation of educational institutions of all levels was introduced, schools and universities, that failed to match new state-standard requirements, were closed. The number of the state universities was reduced on the basis of consolidation; many departments and specialties that were considered useless were annulled; due to downsizing, the number of teachers and professors decreased greatly.

The system of organizing and financing science underwent radical changes. Alongside the funding appropriated from the state budget, competition-grant financing of research projects was introduced, dramatically changing the old Soviet model of managing science. Such encouragement of more competition and merit among scientists, together with large-scale staff-reduction and institutional downsizing, created favorable grounds for young scientists, but left many old guard honored scientists and scholars out of the sphere of science and scholarship.

On May 9th 2005, for the first time ever the president of the United States of America visited Georgia; in his speech in front of estimated 100,000 Georgians he applauded Georgia's reforms and called it "the beacon of Democracy".

The swiftness of reforms, the government's unwillingness to compromise on it's pace, and strong self-confidence made the necessary changes dramatic, painful and irritating for many. New policies were frequently enforced by ignoring the opinion of the doubtful skeptics and not rarely, the forms of implementation took a rude form, causing the discontent of some parts of intellectual society. Introduction of rule of law and merit-based civic order deprived some of the old elites the benefits they enjoyed before the revolution. Promotions of mainly young people to key positions spawned anger in many representatives of older generations.

Alongside the reforms, M. Saakashvili's government set themselves the following main task: the restoration of the territorial integrity of Georgia, the integration into Euro-Atlantic organizations and elimination of poverty and unemployment.



Besides the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, a major challenge to Georgia's territorial integrity was the Autonomous Republic of Ajara where a local dictator Aslan Abashidze had ruled the region with autocratic grip since 1991. Throughout the years before the "Rose Revolution" Shevardnadze was fiercely criticized by then opposition leader Saakashvili for failing to impose constitutional control over Ajara and not being able to deal with its local dictator Aslan Abashidze who had openly refused to comply with Tbilisi. Human right violations, arrests of political opponents of Abashidze's regime and election rigging in favor of Abashidze's "Revival Party" were widespread in the autonomous republic. Abashidze enjoyed friendship with high-ranking Russian officials and had open business interests with international criminal authorities. Ajara had refused to pay taxes in Georgian budget and was alleged to be a drug cartel hub.

The "Rose Revolution" and Saakashvili's rise to power created a serious political crisis between Abashidze and the new government in Tbilisi. Abashidze saw this as a threat to his reign and the continued semi-independence of Ajara. Not long after, he denounced the downfall of Shevardnadze as a "coup" and declared a state of emergency in Ajaria to quell the mounting protest by Ajarian public and his opposition who energized by Saakashvili's victory in Tbilisi and refused to be oppressed by the local dictator. Eventually, Abashidze was not able to cope with the pressure both from the public and Tbilisi. His desperate moves, such as blowing up the bridges connecting Ajara to the rest of Georgia and using force against peaceful demonstrators caused an immense outrage of the Georgian public, resulting in massive protests against Abashidze. On May 6, 2004, Saakashvili led yet another successful peaceful revolution, this time in Batumi, the capitol of Ajara. Abashidze fled to Moscow where he found refuge.

Abashidze's property in Georgia, as well as that of his close relatives, was frozen by the Georgian courts and eventually transferred to the state's ownership.

Aslan Abashidze's removal from governing Ajara and subordinating the recalcitrant region to Tbilisi again was considered to be a great success. Instead of the overthrown autocratic regime democratic processes began to develop in Ajara. Liberal economic reforms, privatization and attraction of foreign direct investments in Ajara followed shortly after, making Ajara the fastest developing region of Georgia.

Another major step towards the restoration of Georgian integrity was taken in a mountainous gorge of Kodori, which was formerly part of Abkhazian Autonomous Republic. For more than a decade the region had been a safe haven for criminals and a zone of total lawlessness, run by local warlords and out of the control of both Abkhazian separatist regime and Georgian government. In July 2006, successful operation of Georgian forces established Georgian presence in the region. Georgian jurisdiction was fully restored in Kodori Gorge and the region was given a new name - the Upper Abkhazia. Creating a bridgehead in this part of the country was declared to be a pre-condition of reuniting the whole of Abkhazia to Georgia.

Georgian government's declared policy was the peaceful reunification of the country. President Saakashvili presented a plan for peaceful resolution of the conflicts. The plan was proposing to the breakaway regions a wide range of autonomy, strong representation in the central government and was overwhelmingly supported by the international community. Number of times, Georgian government attempted launching economic and social projects in the conflict zones in demonstration of its peaceful intentions.

"The Revolution of Roses" November, 2003



Protest rallies



Participants of the revolution rush into the Parliament

Russia's aggression in Georgia, August 2008



Besides the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, a major challenge is



Bombed town of Gori



The arrival of presidents of European countries in Tbilisi



Protest manifestation



Due to the Russia's grip over the separatist regimes and its continues efforts to sabotage peace, a breakthrough in the conflict resolution process was not achieved. However, some positive signs became visible. One group of the South Ossetia's separatist regime, which had once fought against Georgian government forces for secession, under the leadership of Dmitry Sanakoyev, a former defense minister and a vice prime minister of the so called South Ossetian government, broke off from the Russian-controlled separatist regime and started a new movement calling for restoration of the region's status as an autonomous republic within Georgia and a program of measures to spur economic growth.

During the South Ossetian presidential elections, 2006, on November 13, in a so-called "alternative" poll organized by "The Salvation Union of South Ossetia" in Georgian and Ossetian villages not controlled by the separatists, Sanakoyev was declared the winner, with more than 80 percent of the vote.

A dialogue on peaceful conflict resolution was launched between Tbilisi and Sanakoyev's government. On May 10, 2007, Sanakoyev was appointed by President Saakashvili as the Head of South Ossetian Provisional Administrative Entity. The next day Sanakoyev addressed the Parliament of Georgia in Ossetian language, outlining his vision for a resolution of the conflict in South Ossetia. The move earned praise from the United States State Department, but alarmed the de facto authorities in Tskhinvali, which ordered the blocking of traffic to ethnic Georgian villages and threatened to oust Sanakoyev's government by force.

Large-scale social-economic changes, taking place in the country, were accompanied by many difficulties and obstacles. Despite overall economic growth, unemployment and poverty remained a great challenge to many Georgians. For many, "Rose Revolution" was seen as hope for a quick fix of all the problems, and expectations were much greater than what could be delivered. Continues economic hardships for many individuals generated frustration and discontent.

The opposition parties reacted strongly to the cases of infringement on private property and violation of human rights. The government was often criticized for the estrangement from the people and for having no dialogue with the public and influencing some media sources; the lack of checks and balances between the branches of government; and the shortcomings in judicial system.

The opposition that had been rather weak at the time of M. Saakashvili's coming into power began to gain some strength gradually. The Republican Party (Chairman David Usupashvili) and the Conservative Party (leader Zviad Dzidziguri) were the first to leave the ruling political bloc as early as in 2004 when constitutional changes were introduced, in protest of strengthening the presidential powers, and together with several non-party deputies founded an oppositional faction "Democratic Front". Other opposition parties such as New Right (leader David Gamkrelidze), Labor (leader Shalva Natelashvili), were also becoming more and more active, however they all remained fragmented and weak, thus not being able to influence the political process.

The unification of scattered opposition groups became possible only in 2007, after Badri Patarkatsishvili, media magnate of Georgian origin, went from business into politics, declared himself as Saakashvili's opposition and started to fund opposition parties and activities with the condition of their unity. Patarkatsishvili was also the sole owner of Georgia's most popular TV channel "Imedi", which was intensively used as the main PR



vehicle for the opposition. At some point the government refused to go on political debates on Imedi channel due to its lack of impartiality and as government representatives called it subjectivity.

At the beginning of October 2007 mass protest began in Tbilisi. At first the protesters had a political demand to nullify the Parliament resolution on holding the presidential and parliamentary elections at the same time in January 2009. The opposition demanded to hold the parliamentary elections in the spring of 2008, as it was scheduled by the Constitution.

The government refused to compromise. The situation became tenser. As a response to government's unwillingness to compromise, the opposition changed its demands by Saakashvili's resignation and abolishment of the presidency. Part of oppositional deputies went on hunger strike.

On November 7 the police used tear gas and water canons to disperse the demonstrators, the dramatic clashes continued throughout the day in different parts of the city center. By the end of the day the police unites raided Badri Patarkatsishvili's television station "Imedi" and forcefully shut the broadcast down. Later that night a state of emergency was announced by the Prime Minister Z. Nogaideli as the necessity in order to keep constitutional order. The clash between the police and demonstrators caused no human casualties but together with the closure of an independent TV channel the move was widely seen as a sign of Georgia's derailment from the democratic track and was strongly condemned by the domestic and international communities. Saakashvili's democratic credentials were undermined.

With the purpose of discharging the situation and underlining his commitment to democracy, President Saakashvili announced about his resignation on the next day and called snap presidential elections. The state of emergency was lifted shortly after and Imedi TV reopened, but was found of air later on.

The opposition forces were unable to agree on a single candidate. The Labor Party presented their candidate – Shalva Natelashvili for the presidency, the "New Rights" supported the candidacy of David Gamkrelidze, and the "United Opposition" – that of the independent deputy – Levan Gachechiladze.

The candidate of "the National Movement" was Mikheil Saakashvili again. Businessman Badri Patarkatsishvili, and others were also put up as candidates for the presidency.

On January 5, 2008, Saakashvili won his second term election in the first round with 53%. The OSCE and EU election observers stated that the election all in all met the democratic standards, but they said that there had been some problems that must be addressed, adding that the problems did not influence the overall result. The Western observers also hailed the elections as "the first genuinely competitive presidential election, which enabled the Georgian people to express their political choice."

Later the same year, on May 21st 2008, Parliamentary elections were held and won by Saakashvili's National Movement Party with 59% of vote and 119 seats (out of 150). David Bakradze was elected new chairman of the Parliament.

On 22 May 2008, OSCE observers stated that the poll was an improvement from the presidential election held earlier that year, but that it was still marred by a number of imperfections. However, in both cases, the opposition accused the government of rigging



both elections and using administrative resources. As a sign of protest, several opposition parties refused to join the Parliament.

It must be noted that the latest to join the ranks of opposition were the ex-speaker of the Parliament Nino Burjanadze, the former Prime Minister Zurab Nogaideli, former Ministry of Foreign Affairs Salome Zurbishvili, and former Georgian ambassador to UN Irakli Alasania.

The opposition accuses the government for ignoring and neglecting national values, for monopolizing mass media; violating human rights, underperforming Judiciary, the deficit of dialogue and estrangement from people.

Russia's Aggression in Georgia in August 2008

The disintegration of the USSR and the appearance of independent states radically changed the situation in the South Caucasian region. At the turn of the twentieth century, a free Georgia found itself an object of the world strategic interests. As the link connecting the east and west, Georgia obtained a new geo-political function in international relations. At the same time the country became the arena of interaction and opposition of political, economic, and other interests of both global and regional scale. Georgia's foreign policy, especially after the "Rose Revolution", turned to the west. This is clearly seen by the Georgian people's democratic choice and the aspiration to integrate into Euro-Atlantic Structures. On its part, the West, the USA, NATO and European Council supports Georgia's wish to become an equal member of the civilized world.

The obvious western orientation of Georgia turned out to be incompatible for Russia's geo-political aspirations in the Caucasus. Russia considers this region to be the zone of its indisputable influence and does not accept the appearance of other forces there. Moscow tries to prevent Georgia's integration into the North-Atlantic alliance and skillfully uses the "frozen conflicts" in Abkhazia and South Ossetia for this purpose.

In both of these regions, Russia's peacekeeping forces were deployed for years and the Kremlin had the role of a mediator and a peacekeeper in resolving the conflicts. However, from the very beginning of the conflict Russia had chosen to support the separatist regimes and sabotage the peace process in every way possible. In this situation, citizens of these zones left their homes. The rights of those who stayed were violated. Georgians were persecuted on ethnic grounds. Cases of kidnapping, racketing, and smuggling were frequent. Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali Region became criminal enclaves. The uncontrolled import of a great quantity of arms from Russia aggravated this situation.

The international community was aware of this situation. Georgia's government tried to replace Russian peacekeepers with international peace-keeping forces in order to change the situation, but this was beyond its power.

On its part, Russia's government also took practical steps in order to increase its influence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The leaders of the Kremlin in clear violation of all internationally recognized legal conduct, distributed Russian passports to the local Abkhazian and Ossetian population and in this way declared the people living in Georgia to be Russian citizens. In recent years, Russia's military and civilian officials were given





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high posts in the region. In 2006, Russia built a military base large enough to house 2,500 soldiers near Tskhinvali, violating international law.

The Kremlin increased its military forces illegally in Abkhazia as well. Without Georgia's permission, it brought additional detachments to Abkhazia, including paratroops, assault units, and heavy military equipment.

V. Putin's decree of April 16, 2008 was a flagrant violation of Georgia's sovereignty. According to it, Russia established a direct connection and cooperation with the separatist regimes, ignoring Georgia. Soon the decree was realized. Russia's railway military detachments were sent to Abkhazia to repair the damaged railway line and restore the infrastructure. The Russian political elite called it "a humanitarian action", but it did not have anything to do with the peacekeeping process. On the contrary, it caused a new escalation of tension.

It must be noted that this was happening when some western states, OSCE and the European Council, presented a new peacekeeping initiative. For instance, Frank Walter Steinmeier, Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs, paid special visits to Tbilisi and Sukhumi in the middle of July 2008, but the Abkhazian party did not agree with his point of view. Abkhazia's de facto government, who did not want to change anything, also rejected concrete offers presented by the president of Georgia for settling the conflict.

The Tskhinvali puppet regime also refrained from resuming peace negotiations. The de facto governments in Sukhumi and Tskhinvali felt hopeful, due to Russia's declarations that the international recognition of Kosovo's state independence would be a precedent for the self-declared republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The Kremlin continued open demonstration of its power. Russian military airplanes violated Georgia's air space several times. In the second half of July 2008, Moscow began large-scale military trainings near the northern frontier of Georgia named "Caucasus 2008" in which 8,000 soldiers and 700 pieces of military equipment participated. The aim of these trainings was said to be preparations for "special operations to establish peace" in Abkhazia and South Ossetia "by force". The trainings were over on August 2. However, the military detachments did not return to their bases. At the same time, an anti-Georgian campaign started in the mass media. Russia's State television channels were particularly active in creating the image of Georgia as a bloodthirsty enemy. The results of this campaign were reflected in sociological inquiries where the respondents considered Georgia to be the number one adversary of Russia. Russia's political leaders needed such a disposition of the public for realizing their planned aggression against Georgia.

The situation in the summer of 2008 became so strained that many experts began to speak about a conflict between Georgia and Russia.

It is quite clear that nobody planned war against Russia in Georgia, but the declarations of some high officials of the government of the country pointed out that if these protracted conflicts were not settled by peaceful means Tbilisi had the power to settle them by force and restore the territorial integrity of the country.

The Kremlin, waiting for the pretext for invading Georgia, tried to lay a trap for the government of Georgia to provoke them. Tskhinvali puppet regime was used for this purpose.

Ossetian separatists from the zone that was controlled by the Russian peacekeepers opened fire on the nearest Georgian villages. The peacekeepers did not try to stop them.



The Ossetians used artillery and other arms. During the intensive bombing, civilians were killed.

Besides shelling, in the first few days of August, hundreds of Kazak and North Caucasian paramilitary fighters were brought in South Ossetia from Russia, they were extensively shown on Russian state-controlled television portrayed as heroes going to fight for their Ossetian brothers. In the same days, Tskhinvali was evacuated of women and children, a clear preparation for war, but a move that looked somewhat inadequate at the moment. On August 6th, the so called President of the South Ossetian separatist regime Eduard Kokoity made a televised statement, wearing military uniform and warned Georgian government to leave all of South Ossetian territory or he would attack and kick the Georgian army out. Shelling of Georgian villages started after these events.

On August the 7th Georgian intelligence confirmed that the Georgian-Russian border was crossed by Russian military, with heavy equipment and artillery. It became obvious that an intervention had begun and soon Georgian villages would become targets of not only shelling but also a full-out military assault. The intervention had already started.

At this moment the Georgian government, which had been for years avoiding number of provocations, had no other choice to take military action in order to defend its citizens and villages. President Saakashvili ordered the military to advance to Tskhinvali and provide protection from aggression.

After few hours, as Georgian army had made major advances around the city of Tskhinvali, in his last attempt to avoid the further bloodshed, President Saakashvili unilaterally offered Tskhinvali a ceasefire and demanded to lay arms down. Few hours of ceasefire was disrupted by shelling Georgian villages yet again. In response to the continued shelling and broken ceasefire, Georgian army started the advance into the city of Tskhinvali. Moscow brought the 58th Army, which had been deployed by the borders of Georgia in advance, into the conflict zone via the Roki tunnel. Georgia was drawn into war.

Besides land units, Georgia was invaded by Russia's sea and air detachments. The positioning of military forces and the great number of military groups and equipment taking part in the operations made it obvious that a large scale offensive on Georgia had been planned in Russia long before. In his television interview in December 2008, Russia's president D. Medvedev confirmed that his country had been preparing for the war against Georgia for some time.

The Russian army, much larger than the Georgian military forces, did not find it difficult to defeat them and to occupy a large percentage of Georgia. Russia's tanks went beyond the Tskhinvali conflict zone, entered the town of Gori, and occupied the highway leading to Tbilisi. The Russian detachments that had invaded Western Georgia occupied the port of Poti, the town of Senaki, etc. They bombed not only the military objectives, but also civilian buildings, including apartment houses. Casualties were great. Several thousands of Georgians were compelled to leave their houses, which the Ossetian separatists first cleaned out and then burned and turned to ashes.

Abkhaz separatists took advantage of the situation and invaded the Kodori Gorge, driving out the Georgian population. A new great wave of refugees from there and the villages of Inner Kartli appeared in the country. The European Council and the USA rescued Georgia from being completely occupied by Russia.



Nicholas Sarkozy, the president of France, played a great part in this matter. He was President of the European Council in that period too. N. Sarkozy's negotiations in Moscow with D. Medvedev and M. Saakashvili in Tbilisi, reflected in "Medvedev-Sarkozy's Six Point agreement", became the basis of a ceasefire. Russia agreed to withdraw her troops from the occupied territories.

Under the pressure of the West, the war stopped, but Russia's president adopted a resolution acknowledging the independence of self-declared republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which he confirmed in the Russian Parliament (Duma). In response, Georgia broke diplomatic relations with Russia.

The military operations that were going on the territory of Georgia from August 8 to August 12 were given the following names by Russia's official circles: "Compulsory restoration of Peace", "punishment of Georgia", etc. In reality, Russia's intervention in Georgia was aggression, directed against an independent country. It was also a kind of challenge to the West, especially the USA, the main partner country of Georgia.

The reaction of the international community was immediate. They raised their voices in defense of Georgia, condemning Russia's aggression and its recognition of the separatist regimes. In August 2008, the presidents of Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the chancellor of Germany, along with the Secretary of State of the USA, high officials of NATO, OSCE and European Council, and the ministers of foreign affairs of many countries arrived in Tbilisi to support Georgia. The USA administration and European countries provided substantial financial assistance to Georgia.

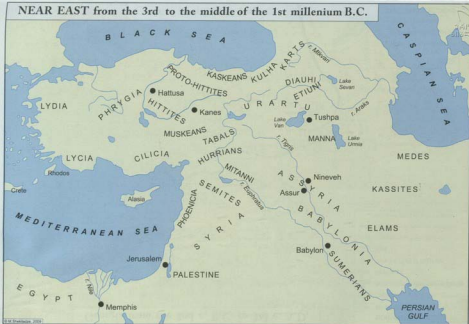
The European Council immediately sent about three hundred observers to observe the withdrawal of Russian troops. Negotiations aimed at finding ways out of the crisis caused by the August events and guaranteeing security in the Caucasus started in Geneva. The negotiations of Georgia, Russia and the USA are conducted under the leadership of the UN, OSCE, and the European Council.

Besides the support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia by the western countries, on the initiative of the European Council an international committee headed by the former personal representative of the UN General Secretary in Georgia, Heidy Talyavin, was set up to study the events of August 2008.

The August 2008 Georgia-Russian war caused new geopolitical events of utmost importance in the Southern Caucasus. Russia considerably strengthened its positions in the region. Georgia's independence faces serious danger. The country's international transit function as well as its trustworthiness and security became doubtful. Russia's military detachments remain outside the conflict zones in the Kodori Gorge, Akhagori, and the village of Perevi. Moscow sent additional military units to Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali Region and started building military bases for them. In addition, Georgia was not given the NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP).

Lately, the situation has gradually been changing. In September 2008, a NATO-Georgian Committee (NGC) was formed. At the beginning of 2009, a Charter of Strategic Partnership of the United States with Georgia was signed and the question of receiving Georgia as an associated member of the European Council is being discussed. All this makes us believe that the West, unlike 1921, will not leave Georgia alone, and this disposes the Georgian people to have an optimistic view of the future.

NEAR EAST from the 3rd to the middle of the 1st millenium B.C.

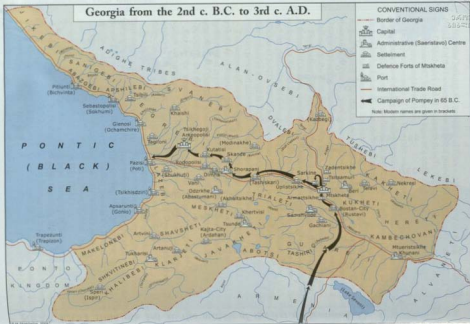


Georgia from the 2nd c. B.C. to 3rd c. A.D.

CONVENTIONAL SIGNS

- Border of Georgia
- Capital
- Administrative (Saeristavo) Centre
- Settlement
- Defence Forts of Mtskheta
- Port
- International Trade Road
- Campaign of Pompey in 65 B.C.

Note: Modern names are given in brackets



Georgia in the 9th - 10th cc.

CONVENTIONAL SIGNS

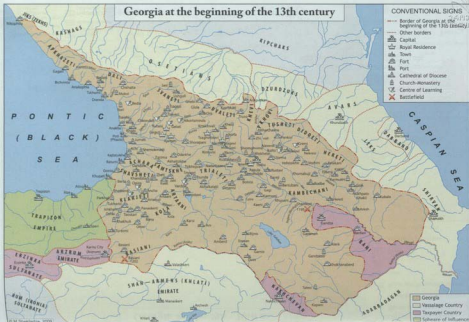
- Border of Georgia
- Royal and Principality Borders
-  Royal and Principality Centre
-  Town
-  Fort
-  Port
-  Cathedral of Diocese
-  Church - Monastery



Georgia at the beginning of the 13th century

CONVENTIONAL SIGNS

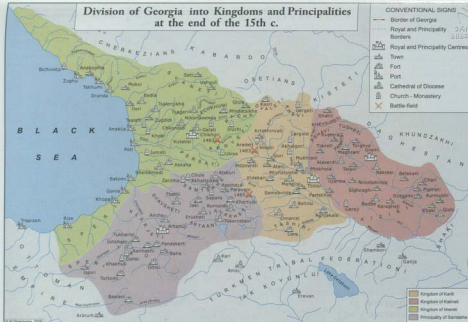
- Border of Georgia at the beginning of the 13th century
- Other borders
- Capital
- Royal Residence
- Town
- Fort
- Port
- Cathedral of Diocese
- Church-Monastery
- Centre of Learning
- Battlefield



Division of Georgia into Kingdoms and Principalities at the end of the 15th c.

CONVENTIONAL SIGNS

- Border of Georgia
- Royal and Principality Borders
- Royal and Principality Centres
- Town
- Fort
- Port
- Cathedral of Diocese
- Church - Monastery
- Battle-field



The Caucasus at the end of the 18th century





Georgia at the beginning of the 21th century

REGIONAL SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Abkhazian Autonomous Republic | Abkhaz |
| 2. Adjara Autonomous Republic | Abkhaz |
| 3. Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti | Ossetian |
| 4. Guria | Georgian |
| 5. Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti | Georgian |
| 6. Guria | Georgian |
| 7. Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti | Georgian |
| 8. Guria | Georgian |
| 9. Guria | Georgian |
| 10. Guria | Georgian |
| 11. Guria | Georgian |
| 12. Guria | Georgian |



ქართული ანბანი

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|-----|--|---|---|---|---|-------|
| Ⴀ | Ⴁ | Ⴂ | Ⴃ | 1 | | Ⴅ | Ⴆ | Ⴇ | Ⴈ | 200 |
| Ⴉ | Ⴊ | Ⴋ | Ⴌ | 2 | | Ⴎ | Ⴏ | Ⴐ | Ⴑ | 300 |
| Ⴒ | Ⴓ | Ⴔ | Ⴕ | 3 | | Ⴗ | Ⴘ | Ⴙ | Ⴚ | |
| Ⴝ | Ⴞ | Ⴟ | Ⴀ | 4 | | Ⴜ | Ⴝ | Ⴞ | Ⴟ | 400 |
| Ⴚ | Ⴛ | Ⴜ | Ⴝ | 5 | | Ⴟ | Ⴐ | Ⴑ | Ⴒ | 500 |
| Ⴟ | Ⴐ | Ⴑ | Ⴒ | 6 | | Ⴛ | Ⴜ | Ⴝ | Ⴞ | 600 |
| Ⴔ | Ⴕ | Ⴖ | Ⴗ | 7 | | Ⴟ | Ⴐ | Ⴑ | Ⴒ | 700 |
| Ⴘ | Ⴙ | Ⴚ | Ⴛ | 8 | | Ⴛ | Ⴜ | Ⴝ | Ⴞ | 800 |
| Ⴜ | Ⴝ | Ⴞ | Ⴟ | 9 | | Ⴟ | Ⴐ | Ⴑ | Ⴒ | 900 |
| Ⴟ | Ⴐ | Ⴑ | Ⴒ | 10 | | Ⴛ | Ⴜ | Ⴝ | Ⴞ | 1000 |
| Ⴔ | Ⴕ | Ⴖ | Ⴗ | 20 | | Ⴟ | Ⴐ | Ⴑ | Ⴒ | 2000 |
| Ⴘ | Ⴙ | Ⴚ | Ⴛ | 30 | | Ⴛ | Ⴜ | Ⴝ | Ⴞ | 3000 |
| Ⴜ | Ⴝ | Ⴞ | Ⴟ | 40 | | Ⴟ | Ⴐ | Ⴑ | Ⴒ | 4000 |
| Ⴟ | Ⴐ | Ⴑ | Ⴒ | 50 | | Ⴛ | Ⴜ | Ⴝ | Ⴞ | 5000 |
| Ⴔ | Ⴕ | Ⴖ | Ⴗ | 60 | | Ⴛ | Ⴜ | Ⴝ | Ⴞ | 6000 |
| Ⴘ | Ⴙ | Ⴚ | Ⴛ | 70 | | Ⴛ | Ⴜ | Ⴝ | Ⴞ | 7000 |
| Ⴜ | Ⴝ | Ⴞ | Ⴟ | 80 | | Ⴟ | Ⴐ | Ⴑ | Ⴒ | 8000 |
| Ⴟ | Ⴐ | Ⴑ | Ⴒ | 90 | | Ⴛ | Ⴜ | Ⴝ | Ⴞ | 9000 |
| Ⴔ | Ⴕ | Ⴖ | Ⴗ | 100 | | Ⴛ | Ⴜ | Ⴝ | Ⴞ | 10000 |

The stages of development of the Georgian alphabet
and the numerical meanings of the letters.



Trialeti. A gold bowl;
 The 1st half of the 2nd millenium B.C.



The Trialeti silver bowl with ritual
 scenes, the 2nd half of the
 2nd millenium B.C.



Trialeti. A golden necklace.



Saduga. A golden sculpture of a lion.
 The end of the 3rd millenium B.C.



Armazi. A golden mecklace.



Vani. A golden necklace. Fragment.



Akhalgori.

Golden ornaments (for templates).



A silver coin "Colchian Tetri".

6th century B.C.



Mtskheta. The church of the Cross. The end of the 6th century and the beginning of the 7th.



Tbilisi. The Anchiskhati church. 6th century.



The Nekressi Monastery. 6th-7th c.c.



Oshki. 10th century (in today's Turkey).



The icon of the Khakhuli Virgin (triptych).



Bedia. A golden chalice
10 century. 999



Kutaisi. Bagrat's church 11th century. 1003.



Alaverdi Cathedral. 11th century.



Mtskheta Svetitskhoveli cathedral. 11th century.



Gelati Monastery complex 1106.



David IV, the Builder. Gelati fresco.



Iqalto Monastery 12th century.



The mosaic picture of the Virgin, Gelati Monastery.



Queen Tamar's fresco Vardzia.



Jerusalem. The Geprgian Monastery of the Cross Shota Rustaveli's fresco. 14th century.



The town of Vardzia, carved in a rock 12th-13th century.



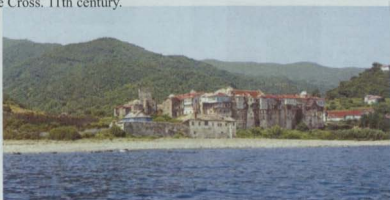
The Petritsoni Georgian monastery. Bulgaria. 1083.



Jerusalem.
The Georgian monastery
of the Cross. 11th century.



Mount Sinai. St. Catherine's monastery.



Iveria. The Georgian monastery on Mount Athos. 10th century.



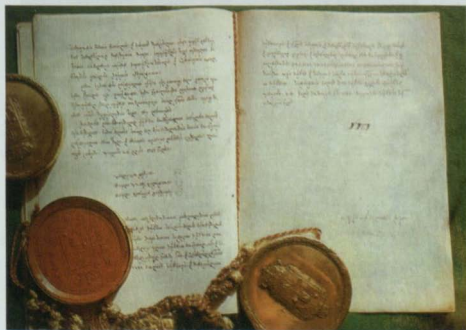
Alaverdi. 11th century. The miniature of Mathew, the Evangelist's, Gospel and the ornament above the text.



Gelati Gospel. 12 th century.



Erekle II, King of Kartli and Kakheti. 1762-1798.



The Georgievski Treaty. 1783.

Tbilisi in the 1st half of the 19th century.

საქართველოს
ისტორიის
მუზეუმი



The Tbilisi Market.



The flags of artisans' guilds.



An old district of Tbilisi.



A Tbilisi merchant.



A Georgian woman,
a representative of aristocracy.



The building of the Tbilisi City Council.



Aleksandr Nevski Military Church.



The Opera-House.

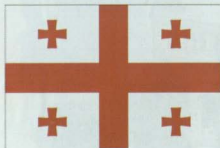
The state symbolics of Georgia



The flag of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and its State Emblem.
1918-1921.



The flag of the Georgian SSR and its State Emblem. 1921-1990.



The flag and the State Emblem of today's Georgia.

Georgia's presidents



Zviad Gamsakhurdia



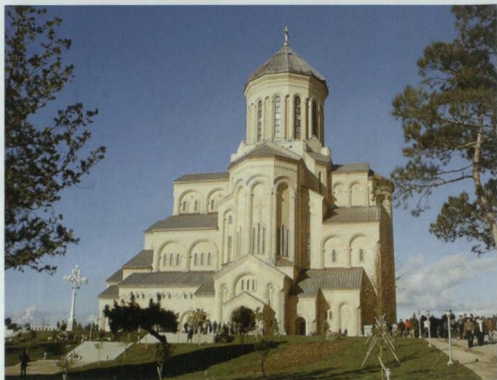
Eduard Shevardnadze



Mikheil Saakashvili



Georgia's Catholicos-Patriarch
Ilia II.



The Trinity Cathedral in Tbilisi. 2004.



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